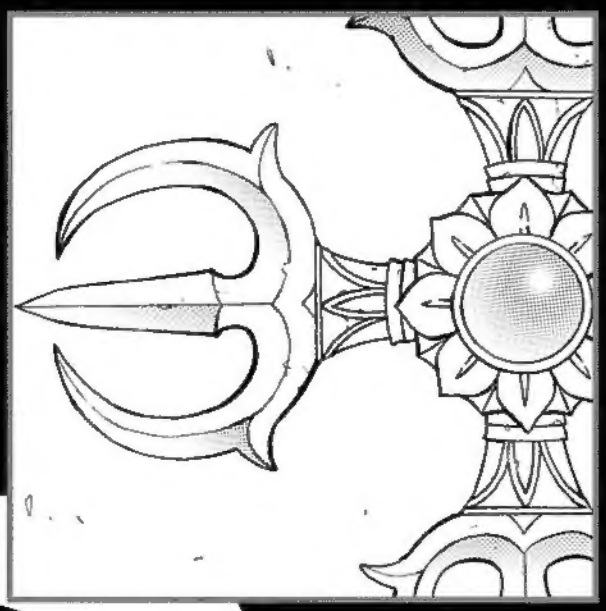
CORPSE PRINCESS

YOSHIICHI AKAHITO

3

CORPSE PRINCESS



RITUAL TOOLS (NOUN)

Devices and implements used by Buddhist monks. These tools carry symbolic significance when used in rituals. The Kougon Sect divides its ritual tools into ten ranks, depending on how sacred each is. There are ten grades ranking from the lowest, grade 9, to the highest, "supreme grade."

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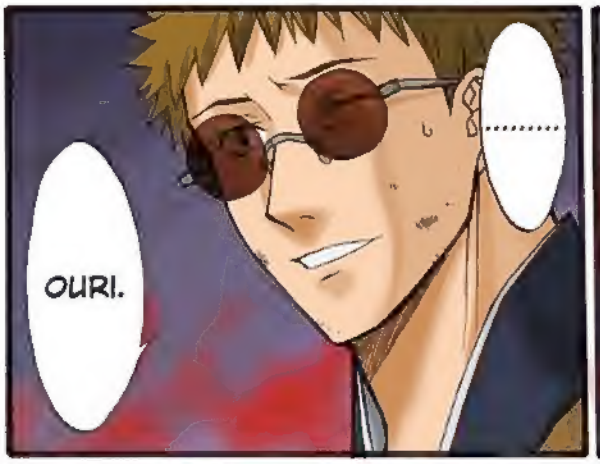
STAND
DEATH 10:
TELLING TRUTHS
AND LIES


.....
OURI.

DON'T
CRY.

I'M SO SORRY.

DEATH 10: TELLING TRUTHS AND LIES

I'M SO SORRY.

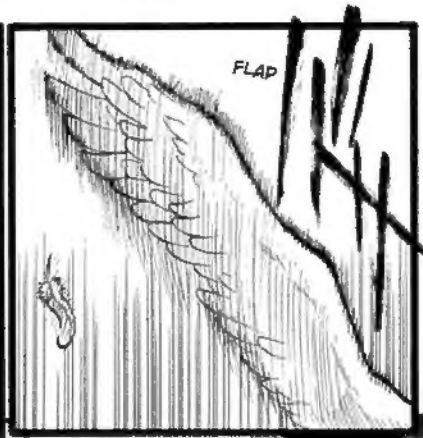
DEATH 10: TELLING TRUTHS AND LIES

SKETCH-FROM-MEMORY ②
KING SERIES

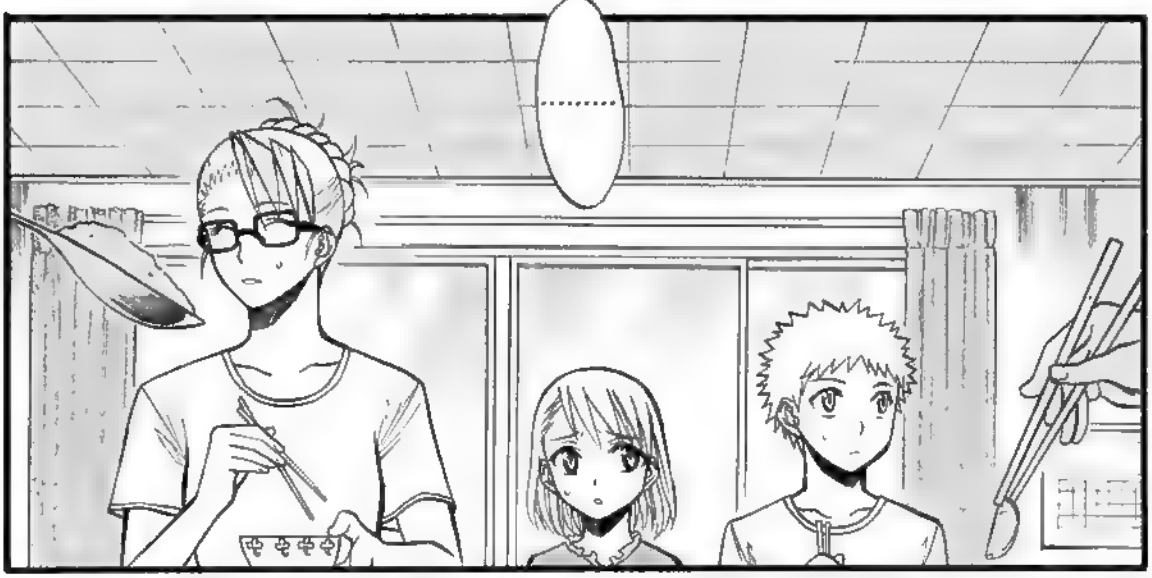
KEISEI SKETCHES DRAWN BY MY ASSISTANTS

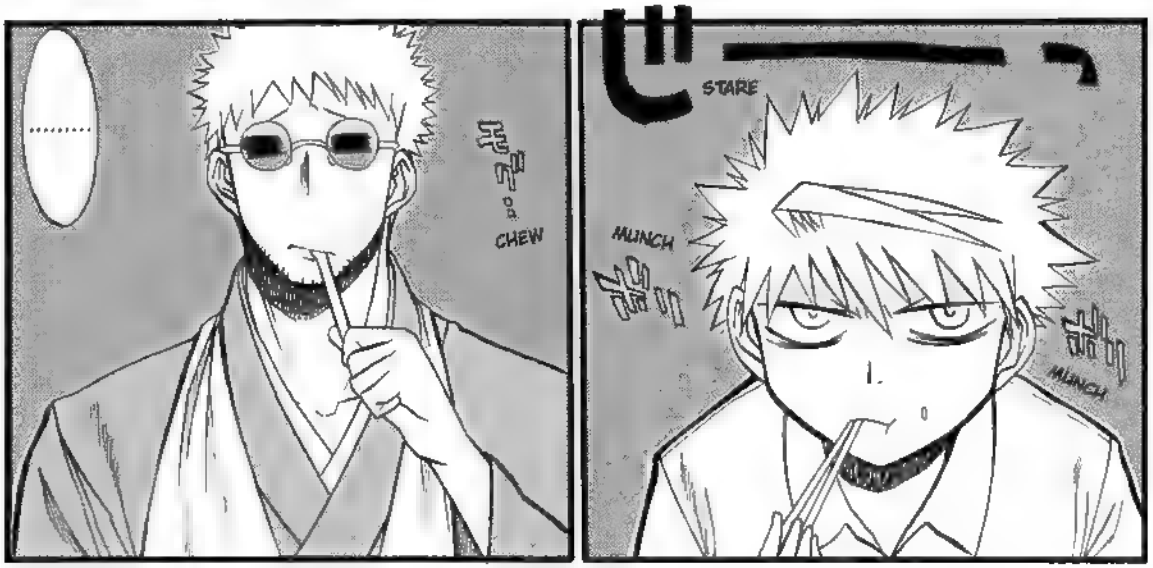
TH—
THAT'S NOT IT!!
GUESS THIS OCEAN OF BLOOD JUST SHOCKED YOU?
YOU'RE A MAN, AIN'TCHA!
HERE, WIPE YOUR TEARS WITH THIS.

ZOOM

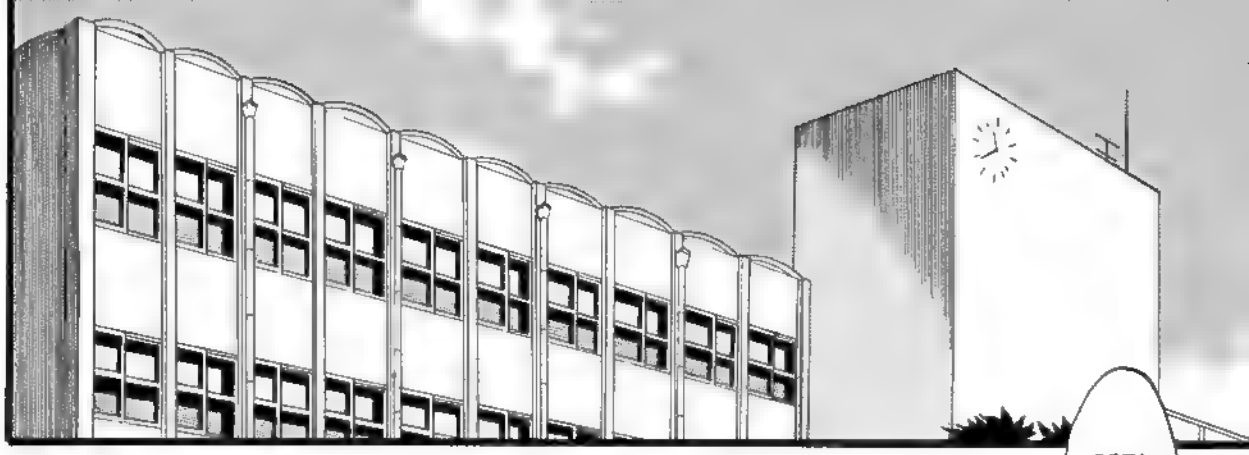

FLAP

SIGN: KOUGON SECT'S DAI-RIN ORPHANAGE





THANKS FOR THE MEAL.
CLICK
It's pretty weird. Hanagami never gets mad like this.
It's been like this since those two got back yesterday.
Eh!? I honestly don't know.
Huh?
What's with this mood, Sensei?
ひそ
WHISPER
ひそ
WHISPER
ぼしょ
MUTTER
ぼしょ
MUTTER
I'M OFF TO SCHOOL.
WHEN I COME HOME... I'LL BE GOING TO THE TEMPLE.
BIG BRO.
HMM?
.....
RIGHT.
BOWL: OURI HANAGAMI
AH. TOO MUCH.
I DON'T KNOW.
IS IT BECAUSE YOU'RE HURT, BROTHER KEI, AND YOU COULDN'T HELP WITH HIS JOKES?
HANAGAMI DIDN'T EVEN HAVE ANY FUNNY ACCIDENTS THIS MORNING.
WAHHH.
COME ON, KEISEI!! WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT!?
CLOSE
パタン



NOPE .....
I REALLY MEANT TO CONFRONT HIM YESTERDAY, BUT.....
NO "GOOD MORNING" FOR ME?
GOOD MORNING, OURI-KUN.

SERI-OUSLY?
YOU STILL HAVEN'T ASKED HIM ANYTHING?

THAT'S ALL I GOT FROM HIM.....
WAGGLE
ぷらーん
SEE? LOOK.
I'M KIND OF A MESS TODAY. HOW ABOUT TOMORROW?

I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU'D BE ABLE TO FILL US IN A LITTLE.....
THAT SO ...?
US TOO. THE MONKS WHO CAME WITH THE COPS TOOK US HOME AFTERWARD, SO WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING EITHER.

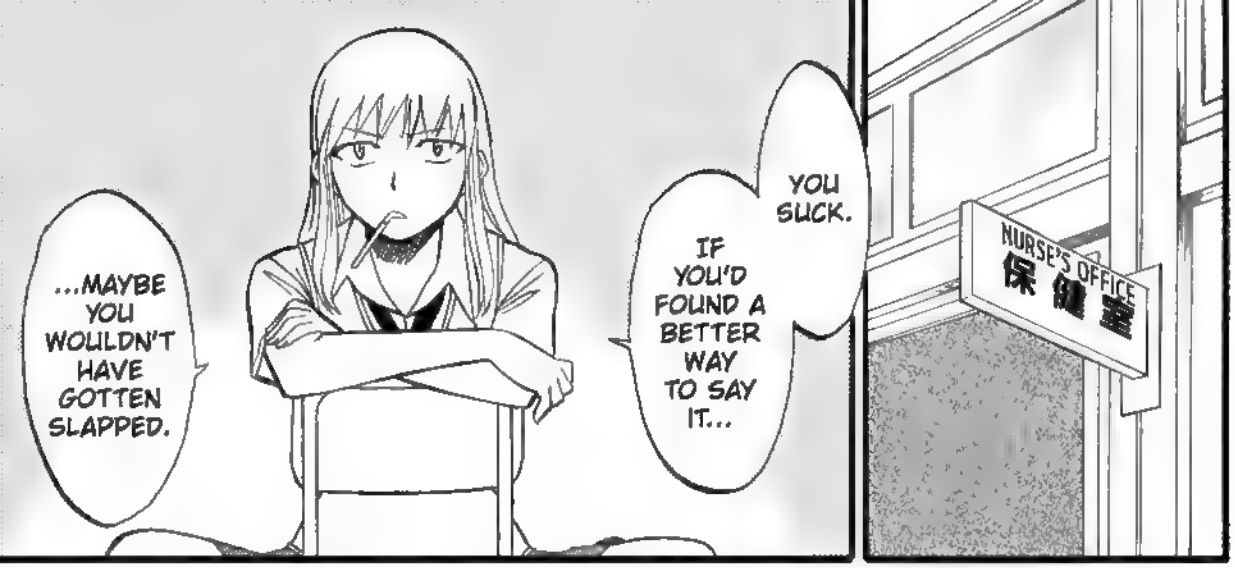
うぁあ...
UWAHH...
OURI'S SUCH AN EASY MARK.
THIS KID...
BIG BRO'S ARM WAS BROKEN, AND I WAS JUST SO CONFUSED ABOUT EVERY-THING.
BEFORE I KNEW IT, WE'D ARRIVED BACK HOME.

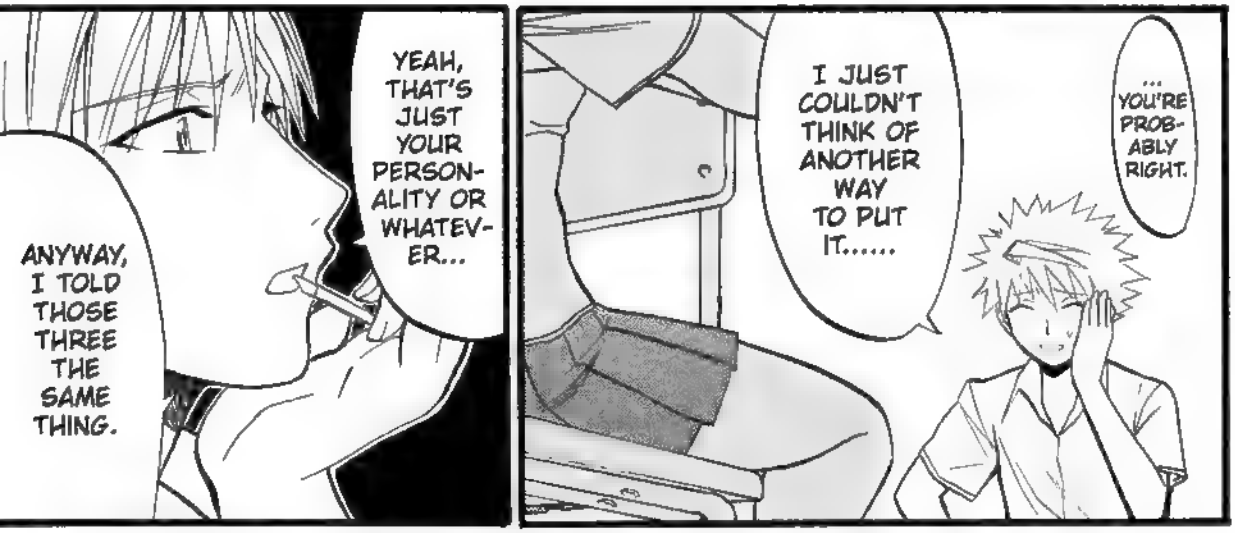
GRRR.
ANYWAY..... AFTER SCHOOL TODAY? NO MORE EXCUSES.
I'LL CORNER HIM AND MAKE HIM TALK...!
LIKE ABOUT THAT RAVEN-HAIRED CUTIE'S NAME.
OR WHERE SHE LIVES. OR HER HOBBIES.
YOU'RE..... INCREDIBLE.....
IN ONE SENSE.
SPARKLE
.....
WHAT THE?
!
SLAP
SLIDE
CHATTER
.....

I'M SORRY ...
...
UMM.
WHY'RE YOU THE ONLY ONE WHO GETS TO SURVIVE !?
WHEN EMI AND YOUKO ARE BOTH DEAD!!
SLAM
HIA!!!
WELL !?
YOU GONNA SAY SOMETHING !?
...A JINX !!
THOSE TWO... THEY DIED 'COS THEY WERE HANGING AROUND YOU!!
WHOOSH
YOU'RE ...
...THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT, SOMEHOW!!
WHICH MEANS .....
.....!! STOP SAYING SORRY AND JUST EXPLAIN IT!! YOU WERE IN THAT "MAN-EATING BUILDING" TOO, RIGHT?
KAGAMI-KUN .....
...AND USHIJIMA.
SO I'M JUST AN AFTER-THOUGHT?
GRAB
HEY, HEY, CALM DOWN, GUYS.
HOLD ON NOW, SHIMAZAKI-SAN.

EMI AND YOUKO DIED, SO...
WHY..... WHY'S IT JUST NOZOMI... WHO GETS TO LIVE?
IT'S TOO WEIRD.
IT'S TRUE..... EVERYTHING I SAID.
.....
WHY'D YOU STOP ME?
THAT'S NOT RIGHT.
IF KASUGA-SAN WAS REALLY A JINX, LIKE YOU SAY.....
SQUEEZE
.....
MMM .....
BUT...
.....
BUT...
I MEAN ...
.....SO PLEASE...
WE WERE ALL TOGETHER YESTERDAY, SO WE WOULD'VE DIED TOO.....

BLUSH
.....!!
IT'S NOT GONNA GO AWAY JUST BECAUSE YOU BLAME KASUGA-SAN AND SLAP HER.
SO STOP IT.
THAT GRIEF AND ANGER YOU FEEL OVER LOSING YOUR FRIENDS ...
.....
WHOA... HIKARI !!
HOLD ON!
SMACK
KA-SUGA-SAN !!
!!
THUMP
...YOU CAN'T GO AROUND MAKING GIRLS CRY, OURI.


...MAYBE YOU WOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN SLAPPED.
IF YOU'D FOUND A BETTER WAY TO SAY IT...
YOU SUCK.
NURSE'S OFFICE
保健室


ANYWAY, I TOLD THOSE THREE THE SAME THING.
YEAH, THAT'S JUST YOUR PERSONALITY OR WHATEVER...
I JUST COULDN'T THINK OF ANOTHER WAY TO PUT IT.....
...YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT.

.....
SHE'LL GET BETTER AFTER SOME GOOD REST HERE.
AND KASUGA'S MENTALLY EXHAUSTED.
DON'T THINK SHE SLEPT AT ALL LAST NIGHT.
WHAT'S UP?
HUH?
?
STAND

I'M ...
YEAH. I'VE GOTTA GO AND ASK. NOW.
SO...
YOU'RE HEADING HOME TO THE TEMPLE, OURI? WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL?
STEP
I'LL BE BACK BEFORE THIRD PERIOD.

.....I'VE JUST GOT THIS HEAVY WEIGHT ON MY CHEST.
NO WAY I CAN SIT THROUGH CLASSES WITH THIS FEELING BUGGING ME.
.....

...WHATEVER. I'LL TELL THE TEACHER FOR YOU.
WAVE
IN EXCHANGE, YOU ASK ENOUGH QUESTIONS FOR ALL OF US.
YEAH.
THANKS, INUHIKO.

SLIDE
WHAT EXACTLY HAS BIG BRO BEEN DOING.....!?
I GOTTA KNOW THE TRUTH.....!!
RING
.....
TCH
...
RING
.....
SHIT
...
RING
RING
RING
RING
SLAM

WARRRRRR
RING
RING
WARP

RING
.....
SHIT.
I'M COMING AL-READY.

RING
CAN'T EVEN KEEP IT OPEN.....
RING
IT'S DONE FOR.
MY LEFT EYE.

FWAP
FWAP
FWAP
ARE YOU UNDER THE WEATHER?
IT'S ME.
.....
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU SOUND ODD.
WHIRR

FWAP
FWAP
WE'VE THOROUGHLY INVESTIGATED THE ABANDONED TUNNEL FROM YESTERDAY.
IN ADDITION TO THE REMAINS OF THE OTHER MISSING PERSONS, WE FOUND EVIDENCE THAT POINTS TO THE UNCLEAN BUNCH'S NEXT MOVE.
Seriously?
.....
VERY WELL THEN.
.....
NAH.
I'M FINE..... IT'S NOTHING.
SHIKOKU .....
A CONNECTION TO DAISHI KUKAI THEN?
MAYBE SOME OF THE RITUAL SUTRAS WRITTEN BY THE DAISHI HIMSELF?
THEIR NEXT TARGET IS SHIKOKU.
I'VE LEFT THE HEAD TEMPLE TO RIKA IN THE MEANTIME. SHE WILL TEND TO YOUR WOUNDS .....
Nah .....
?
KAMIKA AND I WILL MAKE FOR SHIKOKU NOW.
THE TRAITOR WILL NOT GET HIS HANDS ON THE SECRET SUTRAS.
WHIRR
WHIRR
WHIRR
MOST LIKELY.

I RECEIVED A REPORT ABOUT THAT BOX THE SEVEN STARS MEMBER HAD.
DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE EFFECTS OF SPIRITUAL DAMAGE ON HUMANS!!
What?
I'M SURE I'LL BE FINE.
DON'T WANNA TROUBLE RIKA AND THE OTHERS.

.....FINE. I'LL BE SENDING YOU MEDICINE TO ALLEVIATE THE DAMAGE. TAKE IT DAILY.
Sure.
.....

NAH, I KNOW.
STILL, I'M OKAY... I'M SAYING DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.

JUST IN CASE, BE SURE TO CHECK ON WHAT YOU OUGHT TO BE PROTECTING.
IN-DEED.
This is starting to smell fishy... Eh, old man?
But, boy.

RIGHT.
.....

I'M NO STRANGER TO SEKKU TEMPLE, BUT I CAN COUNT THE NUMBER OF TIMES I'VE COME ALONE ON ONE HAND.....
COME TO THINK OF IT.....
GULP
.....
SILENT
JUST HERE TO SEE BIG BRO...
SLIDE
.....WHAT'M I SO NERVOUS ABOUT ANYWAY!!...?
...BIG BRO? YOU HERE?

HIS ZORI SANDALS.....
NORMALLY, I'D JUST SHOUT FOR HIM UNTIL HE COMES OUT.....
BUT TODAY I'VE GOT SOME THINGS I NEED TO KNOW...!
TMP
BIG BRO .....
I'M COMING IN...

LIKE A SPACE CUT OFF FROM REALITY.
IT'S ALL SO EERIE.....
NO..... WHEN I'M HERE...
MAYBE I'M THE ONE OUT OF PLACE...
B-BAM
REVEAL IT.
YOUR REAL BODY.
PLINK
PLINK
PLINK
!!
BLAM
WAIT JUST A SECOND !!
WHOAAAA.
YOU LONELY?
WHAT'RE YOU MUMBLING ABOUT?
YOU TALK TO YOURSELF A LOT.
JOLT
I'LL CONFRONT BIG BRO...AND GET HIM TO EXPLAIN EVERYTHING.....
EVERYTHING.....
THIS UNEASE TOO..... ALL MY WEIRD FEELINGS.....
.....
IT'S FINE..... DON'T THINK ABOUT IT.

NAH... THAT'S FINE.
THANK YOU.
ALL I'VE GOT IS THIS.
SORRY. I USED UP MY HOT TEA WATER.
GLUG GLUG GLUG

IT'S JUST THAT I HAD TO KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE .....
WELL... SORRY .....

OH.
BECAUSE OF COURSE I NEVER IMAGINED YOU'D PLAY HOOKY AND COME HERE.
GLARE

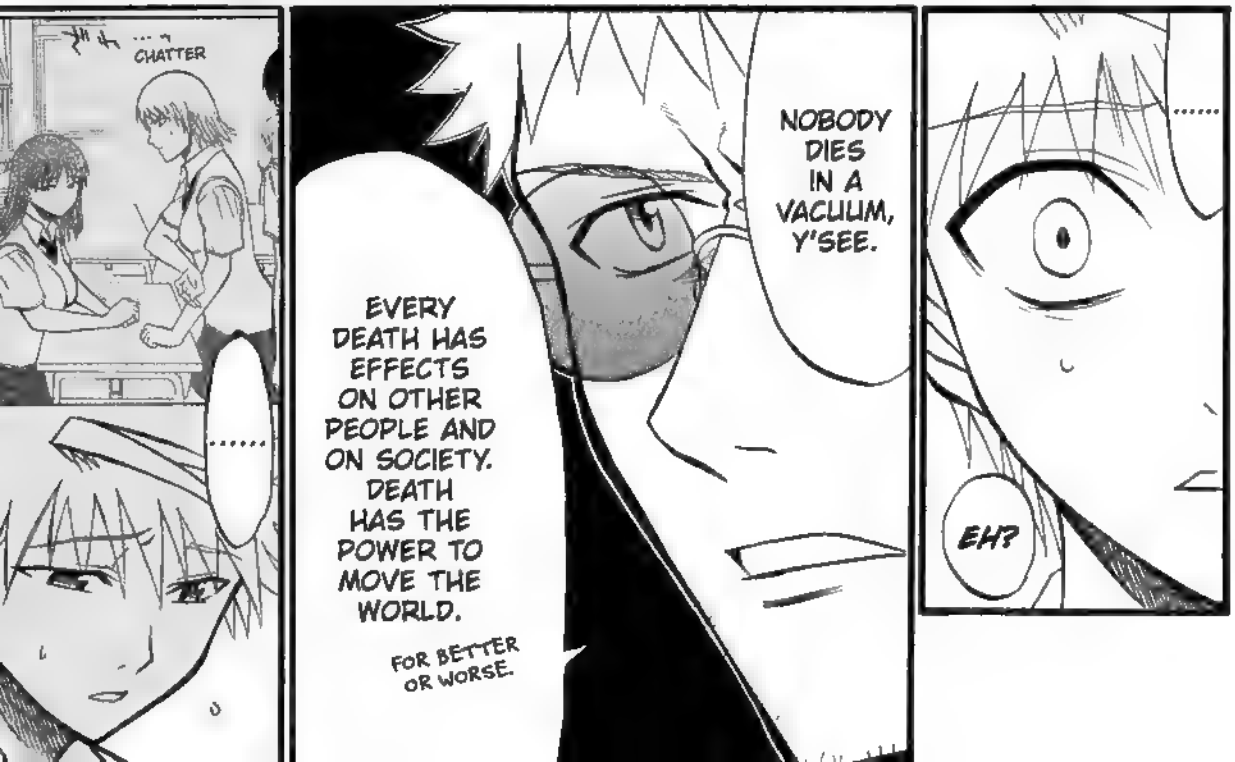
SO WHAT DO YOU NEED TO ASK?
SURE.
CLUNK

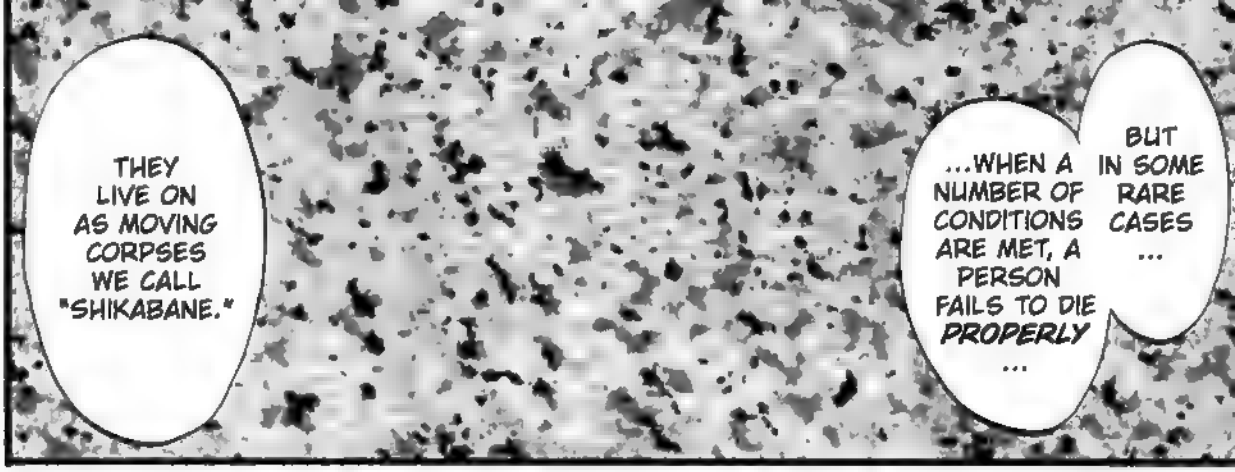
YEAH... NO HELPING IT.
.....

EVERYTHING I DON'T KNOW ABOUT WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DOING..... TELL ME.....
EVERY-THING.
.....

HEY, OURI.
THIS ISN'T GONNA BE A FUN CONVER-SATION...
..... EV-ERY-THING.
WELL.

YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT...WHAT HAPPENS TO PEOPLE WHEN THEY DIE?


... CHATTER
.....
EVERY DEATH HAS EFFECTS ON OTHER PEOPLE AND ON SOCIETY. DEATH HAS THE POWER TO MOVE THE WORLD.
FOR BETTER OR WORSE.
NOBODY DIES IN A VACUUM, Y'SEE.
.....
EH?


BUT IN SOME RARE CASES ...
...WHEN A NUMBER OF CONDITIONS ARE MET, A PERSON FAILS TO DIE *PROPERLY* ...
THEY LIVE ON AS MOVING CORPSES WE CALL "SHIKABANE."

WELL.
THAT ONE HAD KILLED ENOUGH PEOPLE...
SCRATCH
...TO BECOME SOMETHING RESEMBLING A VENGEFUL SPIRIT.

.....
THAT "MR. WHISPER"...
WAS HE..... ONE OF THOSE?
SQUEEZE

SOMETHING HAS TO HELP THOSE UNDEAD TRULY DIE AND KEEP THE WORLD TURNING.
AND FOR A THOUSAND YEARS STRAIGHT NOW, THAT SOMETHING HAS BEEN THE ENLIGHTENED JUSTICE OF THE KOUGON SECT'S FOUNDER.

.....BUT... WHY DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS, BIG BRO...?
AHH .....

SHIKABANE ARE UNDEAD THOUGH, AND HUMANS JUST CAN'T STAND UP TO THEM ALONE.
OUR COUNTERMEASURE? WE USE A CERTAIN TECHNIQUE ON SOME OF THOSE SAME, SPECIAL CORPSES.
WE CALL THEM ...

...

MAKINA.
YOU'RE HOME.
SHIKABANE TURNED INTO UNDEAD-KILLERS BY THE KOUGON SECT.
CORPSE PRIN-CESSES.
...TELL HIM TOO MUCH AND HE'LL ONLY BE IN MORE DANGER... YOU DO REALIZE THAT, RIGHT?
I KNOW YOU WANT TO SATISFY THIS BOY'S CURIOSITY, BUT...
KEI-SEI.
...CORPSE PRINCESS AIN'T AN UNDEAD
BADUM
OF COURSE I'D BE WORRIED ABOUT MY OWN FAMILY!!
STAND
KEISEI IS... MY BIG BRO.
ARE YOU... ANGRY, MAKINA?
R-RIGHT.
BUT I'M BIGGER THAN YOU...! (AT LEAST HEIGHT-WISE)
TREATING ME LIKE A KID?
MAD

YES. I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO FEAR LOSING FAMILY.
BUT...
YOU WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR TRIPPING UP KEISEI IN THE FINAL, CRITICAL MOMENTS.
SO I'LL ASK YOU NOT TO INTERFERE AGAIN.

.....
I AM KEISEI'S CORPSE PRIN-CESS.
SO YES.

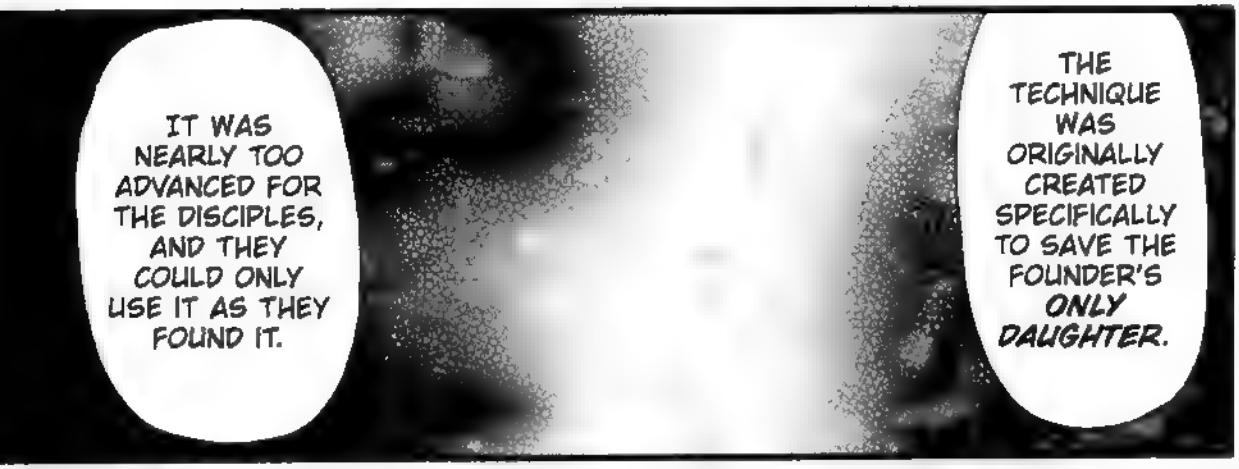
.....
SO YOU..... FIGHT ALONGSIDE HIM.

I'LL TELL YOU WHY MOST CORPSE PRINCESS-ES ARE WOMEN..... GIRLS, SPECIFI-CALLY.
GIRLS ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN DO IT.
IN MOST CASES.
スーパー SUPERMARKET マーケット

.....

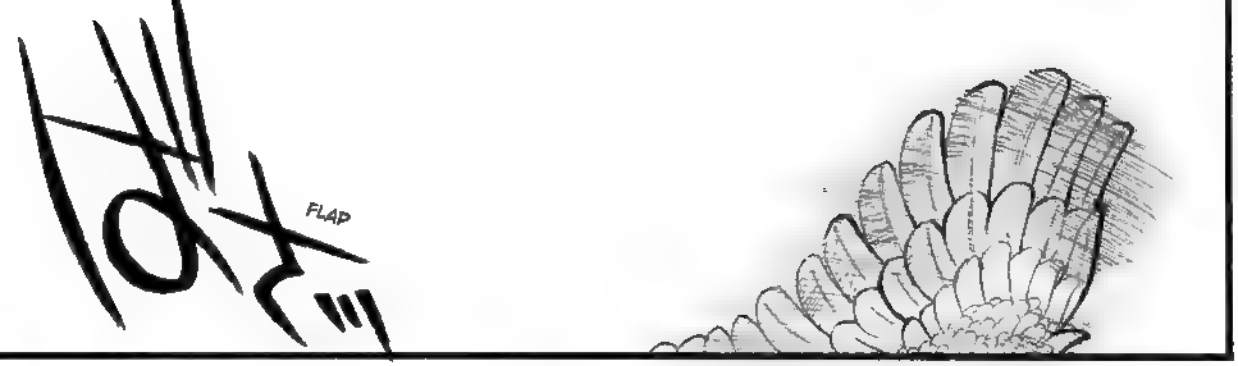
... BUT ...
YOU'RE JUST A GIRL ...
NO OLDER THAN ME...

THE HIDDEN TECHNIQUES OF ESOTERIC BUDDHISM BEGAN WITH THE DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA HIMSELF. THEY SAW THEM AS MEANS OF SALVATION.
IF THEY HADN'T CLUNG TO THE RELICS LEFT BEHIND BY THE BUDDHA, THOSE DISCIPLES COULDN'T HAVE SAVED ANYONE.....
SIMILARLY, THE TECHNIQUE FOR CREATING CORPSE PRINCESSES WAS CONCEIVED BY OUR FOUNDER AND PASSED ON.
HOWEVER ...


THE TECHNIQUE WAS ORIGINALLY CREATED SPECIFICALLY TO SAVE THE FOUNDER'S ONLY DAUGHTER.
IT WAS NEARLY TOO ADVANCED FOR THE DISCIPLES, AND THEY COULD ONLY USE IT AS THEY FOUND IT.

THE SPELL WAS MADE FOR THE FOUNDER'S DAUGHTER, SO IT ONLY WORKED ON CORPSE GIRLS OF SIMILAR AGE AND ASTROLOGICAL PROPERTIES...
IT WAS A FUNDAMENTALLY INCOMPLETE TECHNIQUE WITH THAT MASSIVE LIMITATION.
.....AS SUCH, THE TITLE "CORPSE PRINCESS" COMES WITH A MIX OF BOTH SCORN AND PITY.
WE PITY THESE YOUNG GIRLS, USED IN THE NAME OF THE KOUGON SECT'S JUSTICE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE UNDEAD...
...BUT THOSE LACKING IN POWER RIDICULE THEM.....
.....

YOU DON'T NEED TO UNDER-STAND IT.
YOU JUST NEED TO ACCEPT IT.
STOMP
ズン
.....
I...
BUT...
THAT'S ALL IT IS!
JUST KNOW THAT YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
.....
TENSE
TENSE
TENSE
WHAT A TENSE ATMO-SPHERE ...
TENSE
TENSE
TENSE
(THE SOUND OF DISHARMONY)
LIKE A THREE-WAY STALEMATE ...?


FLAP

...AH, RO-GERE-SAN.
BURST
WELL?

FLAP

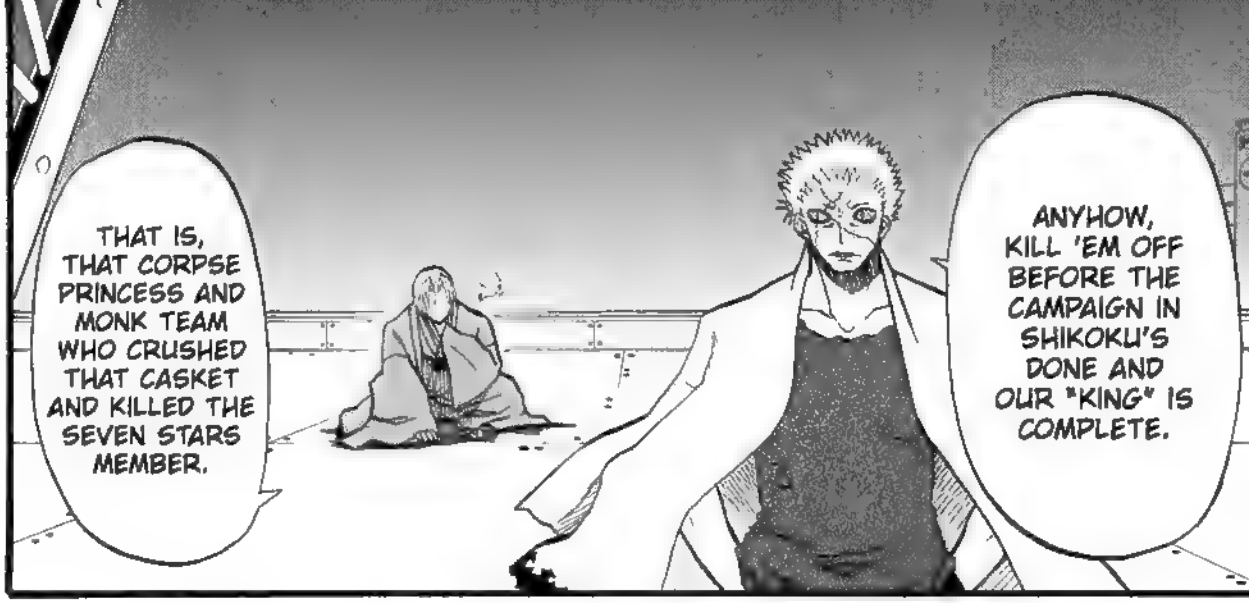
IZUWA OF THE SEVEN STARS— KNOWN AS "MR. WHISPER"— WAS DEFEATED.
I SAW IT ALL THROUGH THE EYES OF MY PROXY.

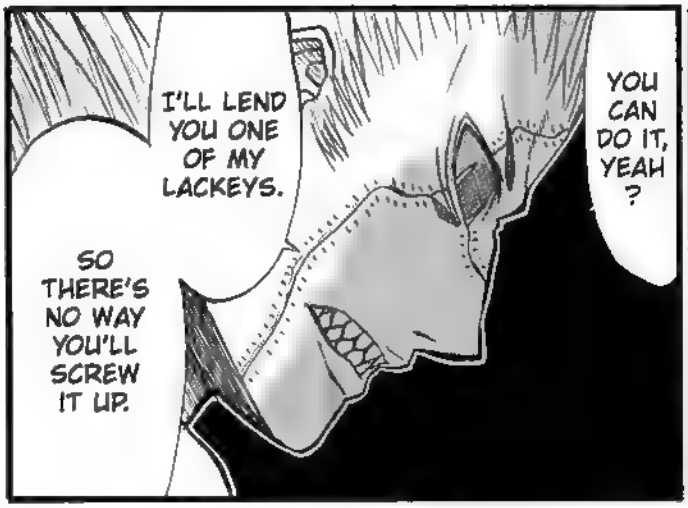
GEEZ...
WE WEREN'T EXPECTING THAT.
HE WAS FAIRLY STRONG, NO?
INDEED..... YOU COULD SAY... HE WAS ONE OF THE UNCLEAN BUNCH'S LOWER-LEVEL ELITES.
THOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHAT POSITION HE HELD IN THE SEVEN STARS.
...BUT BEYOND THAT...
THE "CASKET" ...?
YES.
THAT "INSANITY CASKET" WAS MADE WITH THE "FINAL BLOOD" OF 108 SOULS. ITS LOSS IS NO SMALL THING.
A SINGLE ONE OF THOSE COULD GREATLY AFFECT OUR PLAN'S CHANCES OF SUCCESS.....
..... CAN YOU MAKE A NEW ONE?
NOT PRESENTLY. THE KOUGON SECT IS ON HIGH ALERT.
WE WILL SIMPLY HAVE TO MAKE DUE WITH THE REMAINING 27 CASKETS .....
AKASHA, YOU DUMBASS. WHAT KIND OF FENCE-SITTING BULLSHIT IS THAT?
YOU JUST GONNA HANG BACK AFTER THEY WENT AND MADE FOOLS OF US?
SQUELCH
!!

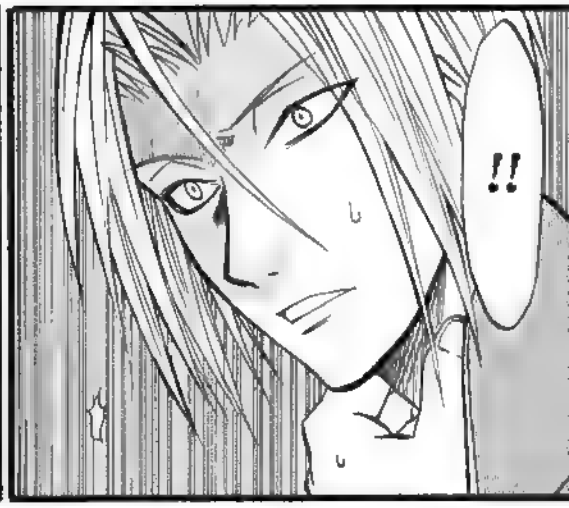
LOOM
WE'RE ABOUT TO GO TO WAR.
SQUELCH
SQUELCH
HUNH?
THAT'S KEITO-SAMA, YOU LITTLE SHIT.
BULGE
FWOOM
.....
KEITO... SAN.

IT'S THE BLOOD INSIDE?
!? .....MY SKIN IS... ...NO...
CREEP CREEP
!
FLOW FLOW FLOW FLOW FLOW
TWITCH
CREEP
BAM
POP
POP
BULGE
?!
CHOMP
!!
BURST
TH-THIS IS...
...GUH...

SQUEEZE
BUT..... HOW DID HE.....?
THAT WAS..... HIS CURSE.
'COS DYING AIN'T GONNA DO YOU ANY GOOD.
GRAB
WELL, HUMAN.
WE IN THE UNCLEAN BUNCH HAVE SHORT TEMPERS.
WE'RE MADE TO GIVE IN TO OUR IMPULSES AND BLOODLUST.
SO YOU'D BEST NOT KEEP US WAITING LONG.
WHOOSH
.....
COUGH
.....I UNDERSTAND, KEITO-SAN.
UNDAUNTED BY THE ENEMY, I WILL NOT DELAY OUR PLAN ANY LONGER.
CRACK
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF DEFYING THE SECOND-IN-COMMAND OF THE UNCLEAN BUNCH.
WELL... FINE. BUT I WANT YOU GOING ALL-OUT.
ENOUGH THAT I DON'T FEEL LIKE KILLING YOU ANYMORE.
..... HMPH.
WE *WILL* BRING ABOUT THE LAND OF THE DEAD.
SO NO NEED TO WORRY.
SNAP


THAT IS, THAT CORPSE PRINCESS AND MONK TEAM WHO CRUSHED THAT CASKET AND KILLED THE SEVEN STARS MEMBER.
ANYHOW, KILL 'EM OFF BEFORE THE CAMPAIGN IN SHIKOKU'S DONE AND OUR "KING" IS COMPLETE.


I'LL LEND YOU ONE OF MY LACKEYS.
YOU CAN DO IT, YEAH ?
SO THERE'S NO WAY YOU'LL SCREW IT UP.


!!

TO SEEING IF YOU CAN DEAL WITH MY OLD HAUNT.
I'M LOOKING FOR-WARD TO IT.
HOPE YOU'RE PREPARED.
LEER

..

THAT WHISPERING IDIOT WAS STRONG, BUT HE LOST 'COS HE GOT CARELESS.
BUT I KNOW YOU WON'T GO AND DO THAT.
SQUELCH
SQUELCH

I KNOW .....
CLENCH
THIS IS DO-OR-DIE FOR ME.
..... AKA-SHA.
..... YES.
..... THE AT-TAINMENT OF BUD-DHAHOOD? I'LL TEACH YOU.
SO LONG AS YOU CONTINUE TO COOPERATE WITH ME.....
BUT..... DON'T GO DYING JUST YET.
YOU STILL HAVEN'T TAUGHT IT TO ME.
MY GOAL. THE "WAY TO BECOME A GOD."
NOT UNTIL I WITNESS WHAT COMES AFTER THE LAND OF THE DEAD...
RIGHT..... I CANNOT DIE YET.

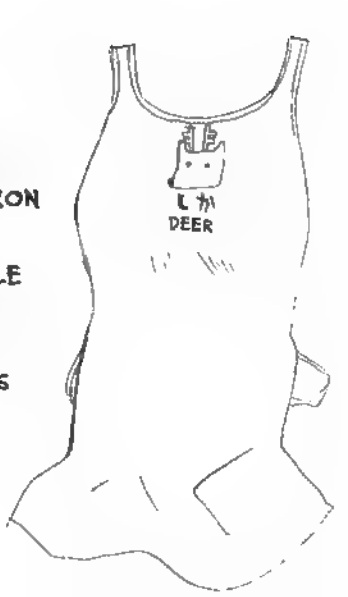
CORPSE PRINCESS
3

DEATH II: BEFORE THE STORM

MAKINA'S
BELOVED APRON

SHE USES IT WHILE
COOKING AND
DOING LAUNDRY.

HER BEST DISH IS
OYAKO-DON.



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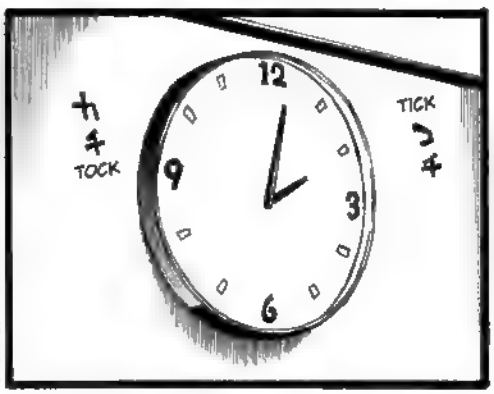
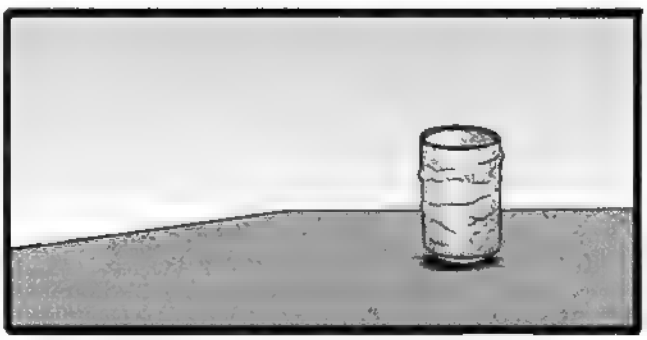
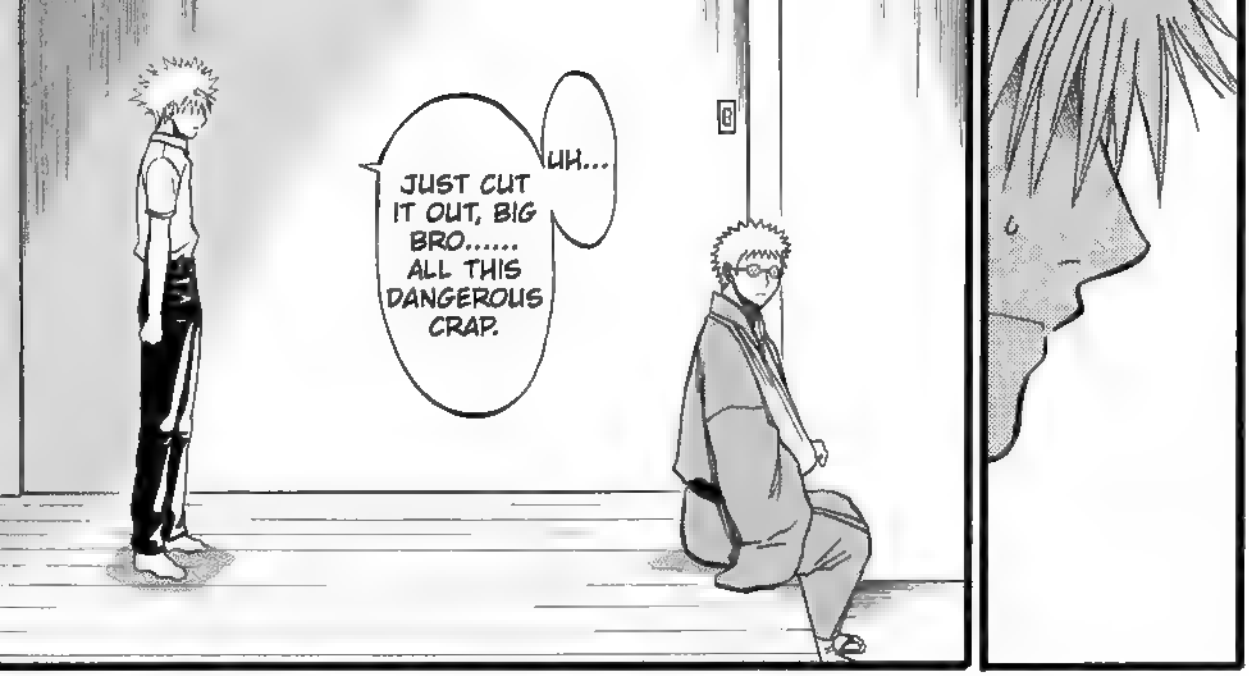

カチ
TOCK
TICK
コチ
12
9
3
6

CLENCH
ギュッ

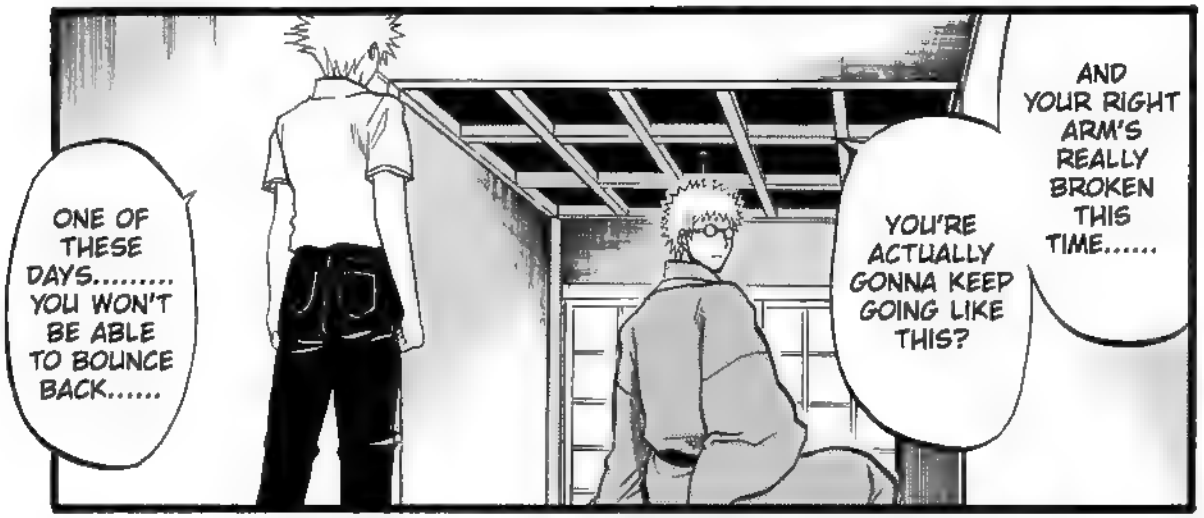


ギリ
STAND
ア

TUG
BIG BRO.
WHAT'S UP...
... OURI?
..... UMM... ABOUT BEFORE... CAN YOU TELL ME MORE?
I KNOW YOU'RE GOING TO THAT "HEAD TEMPLE" AGAIN NOW.
YEAH. BUT I'LL BE BACK SOON.
..... SURE.
..... OF COURSE THAT WASN'T ENOUGH TO SATISFY HIM.


UH...
JUST CUT IT OUT, BIG BRO..... ALL THIS DANGEROUS CRAP.

LIKE THAT EYE. NOT SURE WHAT'S WRONG, BUT YOU CAN'T OPEN IT, RIGHT?
YOUR INJURIES'VE BEEN GETTING WORSE AND WORSE LATELY.
AND WHY NOT ?
I CAN'T DO THAT, OURI.
.....


ONE OF THESE DAYS..... YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO BOUNCE BACK.....
YOU'RE ACTUALLY GONNA KEEP GOING LIKE THIS?
AND YOUR RIGHT ARM'S REALLY BROKEN THIS TIME.....

...LIGHT AN INCENSE STICK AND SAY A PRAYER FOR ME.
.....WHEN THAT DAY COMES...

CRACK
POW
!!
BIG BRO .....!
.....
I'M NOT JOKING AROUND.
SO!!
...!!
GRIND
BUT THIS IS PART OF MY FAITH. I CAN'T CHANGE THAT.
I KNOW THAT.
WHAT HAP-PENS IF YOU DIE!?
WHAT DO WE DO THEN !!?
SO YOUR FAITH'S MORE IM-PORTANT THAN THE ORPHAN-AGE!?

I DON'T KNOW ...
... WHAT I'D DO WITH-OUT YOU!!!

YOU LOOKED LIKE A TOTAL STRANGER..... I DIDN'T LIKE IT.....
.....
THAT WAS SO SCARY..... SEEING YOU ALL COVERED IN BLOOD.....
...

IT'S BEING TURNED UPSIDE-DOWN .....
THE WORLD I THOUGHT I KNEW .....

PLEASE... DON'T FIGHT ANYMORE..... I'M BEGGING YOU.
..... BUT ...
SORRY ABOUT THAT OUT-BURST.

TWITCH
RUFFLE

.....
THANKS, OURI.
BUT I JUST CAN'T STOP.
AND IT'S NOT JUST THE MISSIONS OR THE JUSTICE OF THE KOUGON SECT.
RUFFLE
RUFFLE
I'VE GOT TO KEEP BEING A CONTRACTING MONK.....
...FOR MAKINA'S SAKE.
I PROMISED I'D HELP GET HER TO HEAVEN.
HMPH.
AND A CLERGYMAN CAN'T VERY WELL GO BREAKING A PROMISE.
BADUM
EH!? HUH.....? THAT'S WHAT IT IS?

!?
WELL...
FOR MAKINA, IT CAN ONLY BE ME.

.....BUT...
IF THAT'S ALL..... THEN WHY.....?
WHY'S IT HAVE TO BE YOU, BIG BRO...?

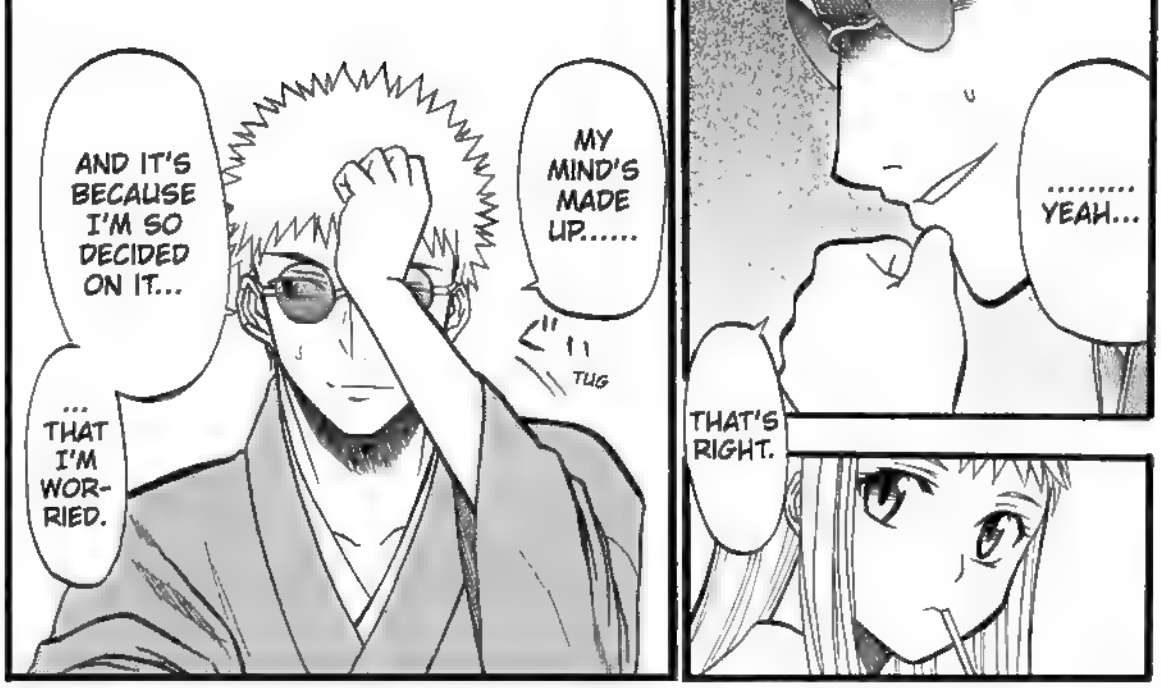
I'M ALSO THE ONLY ONE WHO UNDER-STANDS HER.
THAT'S WHY I'VE GOT TO BE HER CONTRACTING MONK.
SCRATCH
BUT I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN STAND BY MAKINA AND HELP HER.

YOU'VE GOT YOUR FRIENDS, RIKO, AND THE KIDS HERE.
PEOPLE YOU SPEND TIME WITH, WHO HELP EACH OTHER OUT.

.....

SO I'M SORRY, OURI...
...FOR DOING NOTHING BUT WORRY YOU.

HMPH.
GLARE
SAKI !!
OH, WELL..... I'M SURE HE'LL FIND OUT MORE. I'M PREPARED FOR THAT.
SOONER OR LATER.
SLURP
SO IN THE END, YOU BLEW HIM OFF AND RAN OVER HERE?
NICE JOB FACING UP TO YOUR PROBLEMS, TAGAMI.
BUT WHEN I AM READY TO TALK...
...I'M WORRIED ABOUT HOW TO FACE HIM AFTERWARD.
BAGS: SOUR, NON-POTATO
THE PROBLEM NOW...
...IS THAT YOU ALREADY KNOW WHAT YOU'LL SAY TO HIM, RIGHT?
HMM?
.....
EVEN SO...
YOU'VE ALREADY DECIDED, HAVEN'T YOU BROTHER?

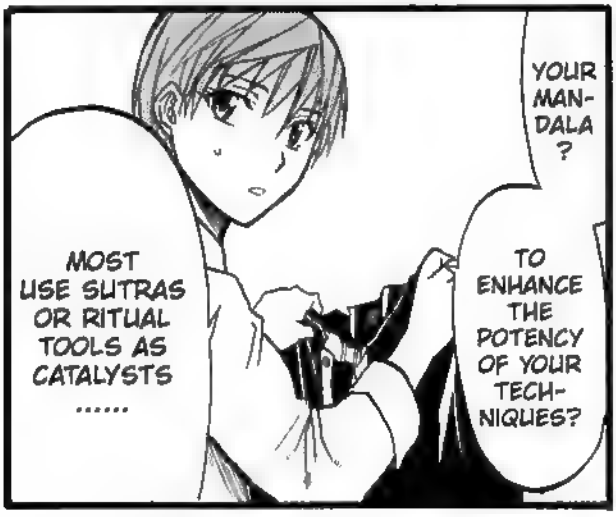

AND IT'S BECAUSE I'M SO DECIDED ON IT...
... THAT I'M WOR-RIED.
MY MIND'S MADE UP.....
TUG
..... YEAH...
THAT'S RIGHT.

BOTH OF THEM ARE PRECIOUS TO ME. I HAVE TO PROTECT THEM.
STICKING BY MAKINA, THROUGH THICK AND THIN...
...WHILE ALSO KEEPING OURI FROM THIS WORLD OF OURS.

YEAH .....
SQUEEZE ギュ
IT'S THE MOST STRAIGHT-FORWARD AND RATIONAL WAY I SEE TO PROTECT THEM.
EVEN IF..
...THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND YOUR METHODS?

BECAUSE IT WON'T HAVE ALL BEEN FOR NOTHING.
THE WORLD'LL PICK UP MY PIECES AND KEEP ON TURNING.
YEP .....
.....
EVEN IF.....
YOU HAPPEN TO FALL IN BATTLE .....?
..... YES.
BROTH-ER.
I FEEL THE SAME WAY.
WE LIVE SO CLOSE TO DEATH, AFTER ALL.
NOT THAT I WANNA DIE.
BUT I'M NOT AFRAID OF IT.
...HOW I'VE DECIDED TO LIVE..... THAT'S MY FAITH.
THAT'S ...
IF MY TREATMENT'S DONE, CAN YOU TAKE A LOOK AT SOMETHING ELSE FOR ME.....?
.....
AH... RIKA.
SAKI !!
WAHHH!! MY DRINK!!
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY? REALLY? GROSS.
SLURP
ずじゅる
.....
SURE YOU DON'T WANT A ROOM FOR THE LITTLE WORLD YOU'RE MAKING TOGETHER OVER THERE?

.....
A... SURCOAT?


YOUR MAN-DALA?
TO ENHANCE THE POTENCY OF YOUR TECH-NIQUES?
MOST USE SUTRAS OR RITUAL TOOLS AS CATALYSTS .....

IT'S NOT FIN-ISHED YET.
I BROUGHT IT SO YOU COULD HAVE A LOOK.
ONCE IT'S DONE, IT'LL SERVE AS A CATALYST FOR MY SEALED MANDALA.

THINK I CAN USE IT.....?
.....
HMM..... INDEED ...

RIGHT.
BUT I HAVEN'T DONE PROPER TRAINING FOR A SEALED MANDALA, SO I'M KIND OF LIMITED.
I TRIED MAKING THIS THING BECAUSE I KNOW I NEED POWER-UP SOON...

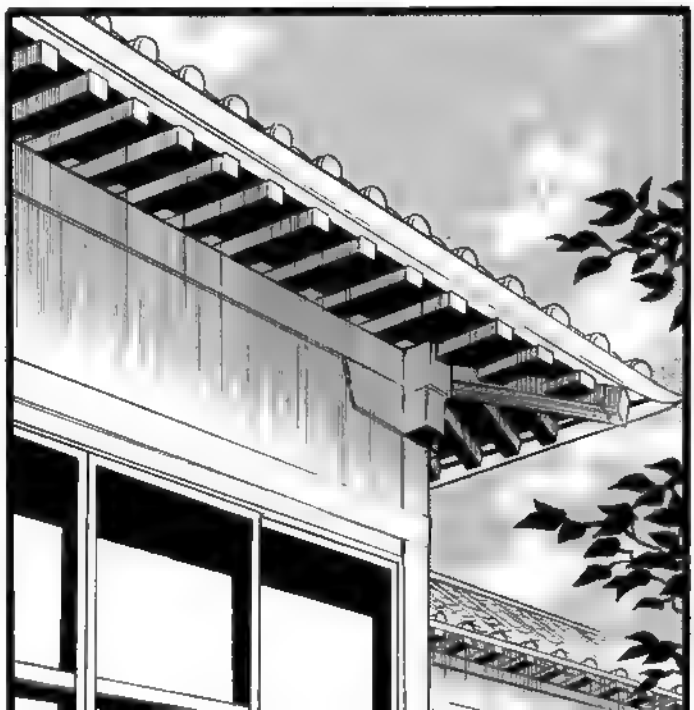
BEAM
THIS IS COMPARABLE TO A GRADE 3..... NO, PERHAPS EVEN A GRADE 2 CATALYST.
WHEN ON EARTH DID YOU FIND THE TIME TO MAKE THIS, BROTHER?
UPON CLOSER INSPECTION, I THINK THIS COAT CAN DEFINITELY SERVE AS A CATALYST.
THE SILVER THREADS WOVEN INTO THE MATERIAL SHOULD PROTECT YOU FROM CUTS.
AND THE SUTRA TEXTS FASTENED TO THE INSIDE ARE OUTSTANDING.
SPIT
MMM... WELL I BORROWED THE SUTRAS FROM THE ARCHIVES HERE.
NOT MAKING EYE CONTACT
THE OLD MAN SAID AS MUCH YESTERDAY. GUESS I'M IN HOT WATER.
WHAT A DRAG.
HA HA HA.
AH, YEAH. RIGHT. SO I HEAR.
3-3;-
WHIMPER
BROTHER...
THESE ARCHIVES STORE VERITABLE NATIONAL TREASURES.
SO WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THIS COAT...?
UMM ...
GLOOM
SQUEEZE
OWWW.
GUH.
THUMP
BUT FOR ALL THE TROUBLE I WENT TO, THE SUTRA STOLEN BY THAT TRAITOR WAS A GRADE 1 CATALYST, AND THOSE "CASKETS" OR WHATEVER TURNED OUT TO BE—MUCH TO OUR SHOCK AND HORROR—SUPREME GRADE CATALYSTS.
THAT'S A HUGE LEVEL GAP.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
BAG: POTATON

DON'T WORRY. EVEN IF THE OLD MAN FINDS OUT...
...HE MAY GET PISSED AT ME, BUT HE CAN'T BLAME YOU JUST FOR HOLDING ONTO IT.
AT LEAST UNTIL MY ARM IS BETTER.

EH?
OH..... I WANT YOU TO TAKE IT AS IS FOR NOW, RIKA.

JUST IN CASE.
IT'S LIKE INSUR-ANCE.
"WHY"?
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, SOMEONE'S GONNA NEED IT.

HUH.
HUH .....?
HE WILL BE ANGRY IF I KEEP QUIET ABOUT IT...
BUT WHY?



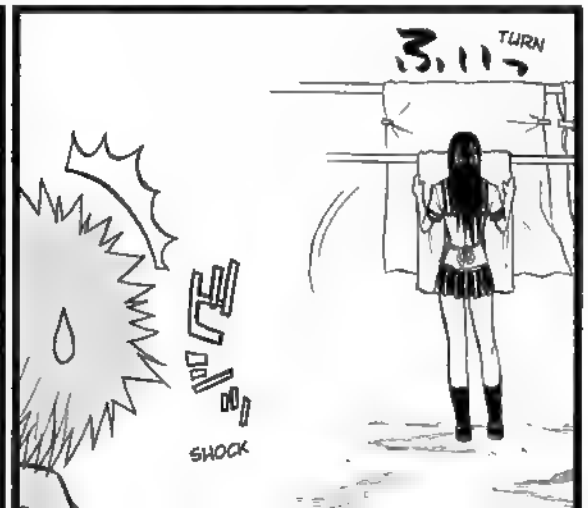
?

.....

.....
SLIDE
FROM WHERE I'M STANDING... SHE LOOKS LIKE A TOTALLY NORMAL GIRL.....

FLAP

UMM... HOSHI-MURA-SAN...?
DO YOU ALWAYS DO BIG BRO'S LAUNDRY LIKE THIS.....?
DAMN..... THAT VIBE. LIKE SHE'S DIS-MISSING ME.....
SAME AS BEFORE.


TURN
SHOCK

WOW..... EVEN THOUGH I WORKED UP MY COURAGE TO TALK TO HER...
NO REACTION.
NOT ALWAYS.
EH?
SILENT
SHOCK

HE WAS ONLY HURT AT ALL BECAUSE I WASN'T STRONG ENOUGH.
WHOOSH
UNTIL THAT SLING COMES OFF, I'LL BE HELPING OUT NOW AND THEN.
KEISEI BROKE HIS ARM, SO EVEN ORDINARY CHORES ARE A CHALLENGE FOR HIM.

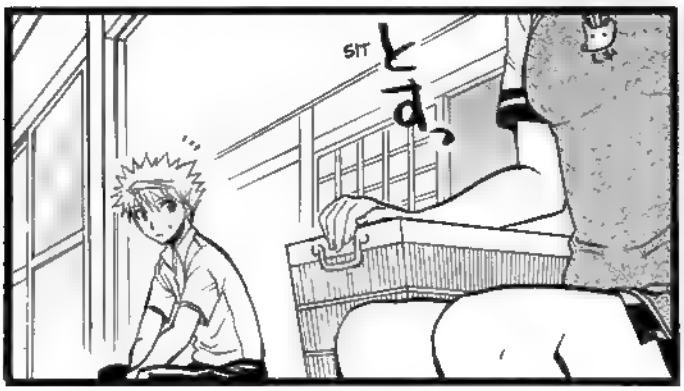
!
GUH.
I OVERHEARD YOUR EXCHANGE EARLIER, IN THE ENTRYWAY.
YOU CAME OUT HERE TO ASK ME *THAT*?
.....
IS THAT ALL?

I DID WANT TO TALK TO YOU A BIT.....
AH..... WELL...

EH!?
YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF ME?
AFTER SEEING THAT SEA OF BLOOD?
.....
YOU SURE ARE AN ODD ONE.....

IF I SAID I WASN'T SCARED .....
...THAT MIGHT BE SOMETHING OF A LIE.
BUT I STILL NEED TO ASK YOU ABOUT MY BIG BRO.
HE'S MY FAMILY..... HE MATTERS TO ME...

APRON: DEER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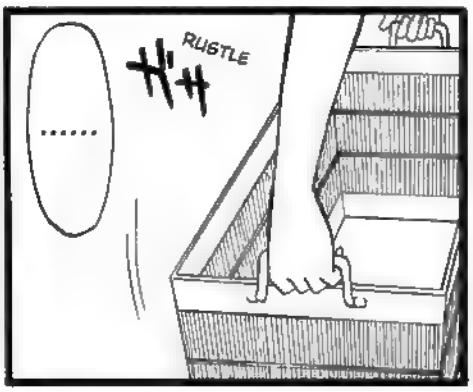
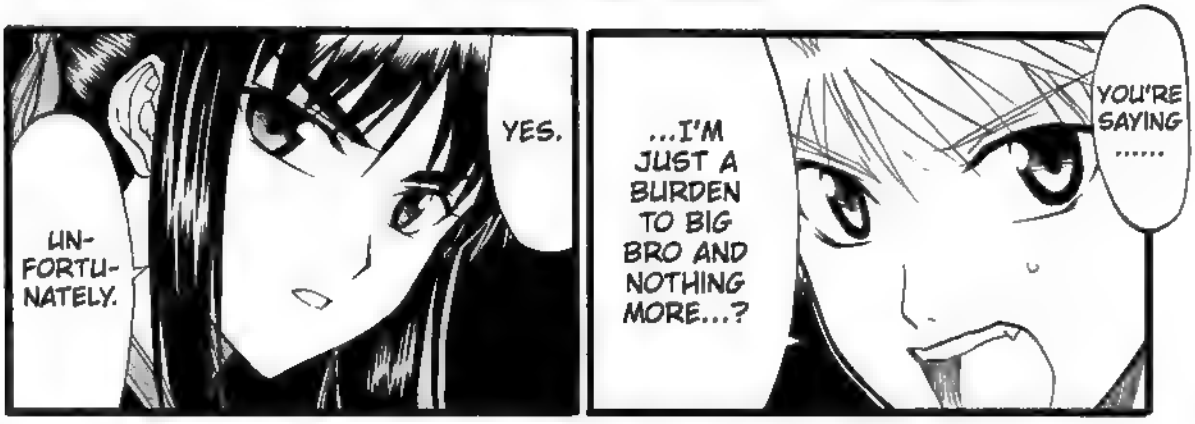

RUSTLE
サッ
.....

.....
BEFORE, YOU SAID I WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR TRIPPING HIM UP.....
WHAT'D YOU MEAN?

OKAY .....
WHAT WOULD BE ENOUGH TO CONVINCE YOU?

IT'S FAR MORE OFTEN THE CASE...
...THAT A MONK IS KILLED WHILE DOING THAT PROTECTING.
HOW-EVER ...
WHEN A PERSON'S GOT SOMETHING CLEAR AND DEFINITE TO PROTECT, IT CAN MAKE THEM STRONGER THAN USUAL.
EXACTLY WHAT I SAID.


YES.
UN-FORTU-NATELY.
...I'M JUST A BURDEN TO BIG BRO AND NOTHING MORE...?
YOU'RE SAYING .....

THAT'S WHY I DON'T WANT YOU ANYWHERE NEAR *THIS WORLD OF OURS.*
KEISEI'S WEAKPOINTS— THOSE WOUNDS— HAVE BECOME THAT MUCH BIGGER SINCE YOU GOT INVOLVED WITH THIS.
PEOPLE HAVE EMOTIONAL WEAKPOINTS THAT CAN'T BE SEEN BY THE NAKED EYE.

...KEISEI IS MY ONLY FRIEND AND COMRADE.
YES. AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED ...
.....
FOR BIG BRO'S SAKE?

I WON'T FIND ANOTHER PERSON LIKE THAT.
BUT BECAUSE HE LISTENS TO ME AND HELPS ME.
AND NOT BECAUSE OF THE KOUGON SECT'S "JUSTICE."

APRON: DEER

I DON'T WANT TO LOSE MY ONLY COMRADE.
SO I GIVE IT ALL I HAVE.
THAT'S WHY I HAVE TO PROTECT KEISEI.

STILL GOT A LOT TO DO.
IT'S BACK TO HOUSE-WORK FOR ME.
THIS CONVER-SATION'S OVER.

THIS GIRL...
.....

.....
WHAT?
.....
UM...
ONE MORE QUESTION.
!?
SHOCK
HOSHIMURA-SAN, ARE YOU..... BIG BRO'S... GIRLFRIEND?
NO LYING NOW.
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE

GRAB
CHOMP
RIP
GRAB
MUNCH
CRUNCH
Doli
!?
JERK
CRACKLE
GROWL
HI
STEP
SWF
.....
BIZARRE
LOTUS.

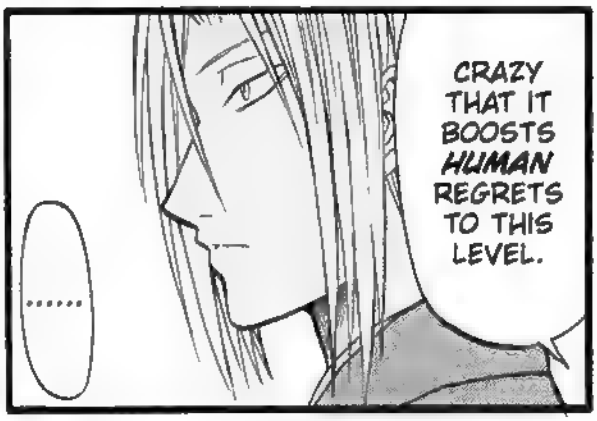
RIP
GIII.
WHOOSH
CRACK
CRACK
DASH
GYAHH !!
SO HE'S ABSORBED THE POWER OF THE CREATURE HE JUST ATE...?
COME.
TENSE
TENSE
SLAP!
!?
GRAB
GAH...

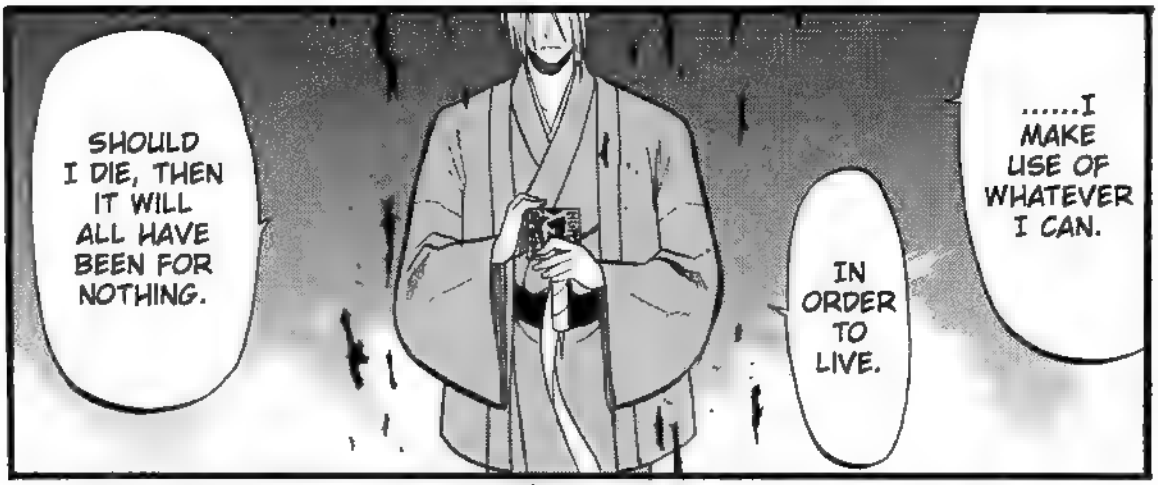
...
STEP
STEP
GH...
...H.
STEP
STEP
GAH
...
STEP
STEP
SLAM
!?
SLAM
SLAM

REACH
RIP
GRAB
GWAHH !!
GYUU-AHH!!
GRAB
GRAB
SFX: REACH REACH REACH REACH
GOHH ...
SQUEEZE
SQUEEZE
BAH ...
SQUEEZE
SQUEEZE
GH...
GAH ...
GRAB
GRAB
GRAB
TWITCH
TWITCH
...
GH ...
BAH ...
GEGYAHH.
CRUNCH

THAT WAS QUICK.
THAT CASKET'S SOME-THING ELSE.
DRIP
DRIP
YES.
.....
YOU ALL DONE HERE?

HA-HA... PRETTY FITTING FOR THIS AGE WE LIVE IN.
YOU USE THOSE REGRETS TO RAISE OTHER REGRETS AND TURN 'EM INTO HATRED.


.....
CRAZY THAT IT BOOSTS *HUMAN* REGRETS TO THIS LEVEL.


SHOULD I DIE, THEN IT WILL ALL HAVE BEEN FOR NOTHING.
IN ORDER TO LIVE.
.....I MAKE USE OF WHATEVER I CAN.

MORE POWER FOR YOUR BOX.
ON TO THE NEXT ONE THEN!
GI HA HA.
NO DOUBT.

I'M SURE THAT'S ALL MEANING-LESS TO A SHIKABANE LIKE YOU.
THOUGH OF COURSE ...

I DON'T KNOW OR CARE IF YOU'VE GOT YOUR OWN MOTIVES.
BUT I DO KNOW THAT IF YOUR JOB ISN'T FINISHED BEFORE THE KING ARRIVES, COMPLETED...
...THEN EITHER WAY, YOU'RE A DEAD MAN.
SO HURRY UP.

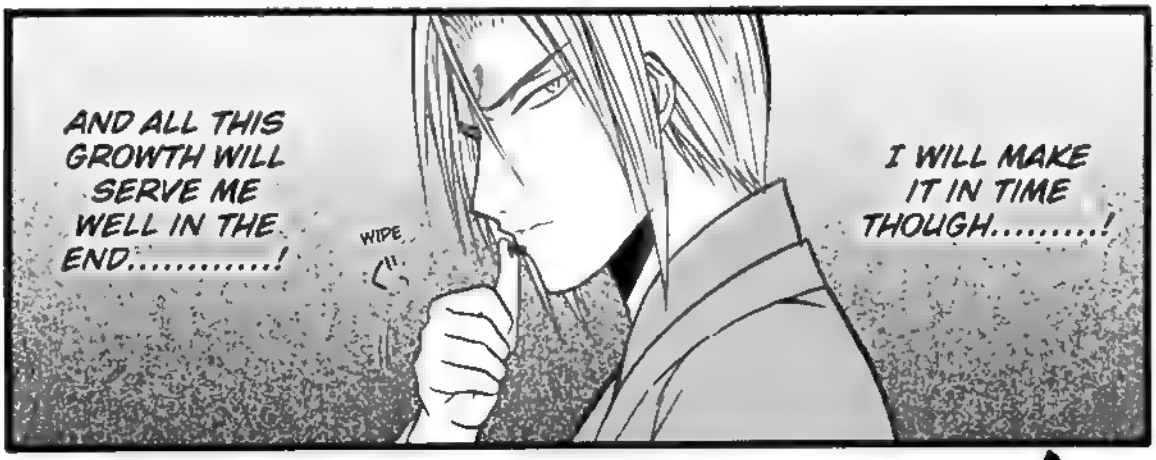
BECAUSE ONE OF OUR FASTEST JUST MADE IT TO SHIKOKU.
YOU'VE GOT TEN MORE DAYS, MAX.
.....
TEN DAYS.....

POP
GLOOP
GLOOP

IF YOU DON'T WANNA DIE...
...THEN KEEP FEEDING THAT BALL O' MEAT "STRAYS" SO IT CAN GROW.
DRIP
DRIP

MY BIZARRE LOTUS IS FATTENING UP NICELY.
IT'S COMING ALONG.
..... YES.

SO SOON.....
.....
KICKBACK FROM USING THE CASKET .....?
TSK.
!
FSSHH
SIZZLE
SIZZLE


AND ALL THIS GROWTH WILL SERVE ME WELL IN THE END.....!
WIPE
I WILL MAKE IT IN TIME THOUGH.....!

TURN
BUBBLE
BUBBLE

SIGN: GRAND MARSHAL SCHOOL OF ESOTERIC BUDDHISM: KOUGON SECT — SANUKI JINMYOU TEMPLE

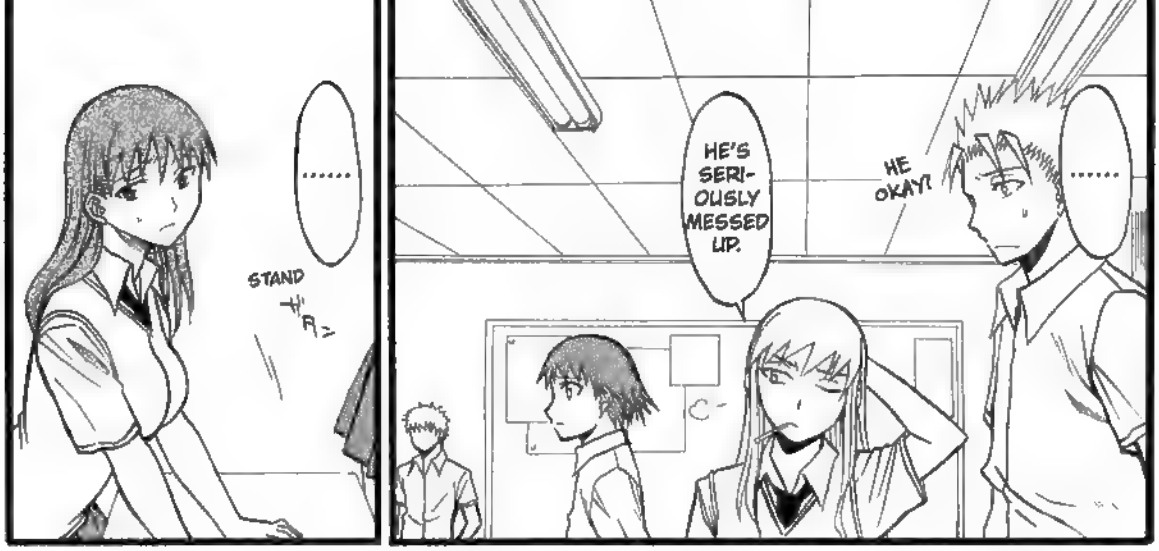
HUH? IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO RAIN TONIGHT.
大師系真言密教光言宗
讃岐 仁妙寺
LET'S HURRY UP AND RETURN.
APPARENTLY, TAKAMINE SOUJOU IS COMING IN PERSON TO INSPECT.
SLACK OFF, AND HE'LL HAVE OUR HEADS.
YEAH.

BUT WHAT'S HE COMING ALL THE WAY TO SHIKOKU FOR ANYWAY?
WELL... THE HIGHER-UPS ARE ALL IN A PANIC...
RACING AROUND TRYING TO FIND NEW CON-TRACTING MONKS FOR CORPSE PRINCESS-ES.
NO KID-DING!
...
LOOM
LOOM
LOOM
LOOM
LOOM
LOOM

CORPSE PRINCESS
3

DEATH 12: CONTRACT (PART 1)
どぼ
GLOOM
SIGHHHH
はぶぅぅぅぅぅ
...
...THIS IS...!
IS HE DEAD...?
LOOK AT THAT FACE!

YEAH, JUST REMEMBER— WE'RE YOUR FRIENDS TO THE END.
SCRIBBLE
SCRIBBLE
TIME TO CHEER UP AGAIN, OURI.
BUT IT'S BEEN A WHOLE WEEK NOW.
SCRIBBLE
SCRIBBLE
YANK
CHOMP
SCRATCH
...
WHAT'S WITH THOSE SOUND EFFECTS?
CHOMP
SCRATCH
YEAH..... WE FEEL YOU, OURI.
WELL, FINDING OUT A FAMILY MEMBER IS THAT DIVORCED FROM REALITY MUST BE TOUGH.....I GET IT.
BAM
RUBBERBANDS
POP
SHOCK
.....
SILENT
DID WE OVER-DO IT .....?
コンチク！
DAMMIT!
I SAID I'M FINE .....
SWAY
SLAM
I'M FINE...
YUP...
SWAY
STAND


.....
STAND
HE'S SERIOUSLY MESSED UP.
HE OKAY?
.....

MEOW...
DID I EVER REALLY KNOW HIM IN THE FIRST PLACE?
NO..... MORE LIKE...
SQUEEZE
"KOUGON SECT"..... "CONTRACTING MONK"..... "COMRADE".....
HE'S NOT LIKE THE BIG BRO I USED TO KNOW.

SNIFF SNIFF
SORRY.
THIS IS ALL I'VE GOT ON ME.
.....
MEOW...
STEP
TMP TMP
RUSTLE
MEW
MEW
RUSTLE
...
OURI ?
SCREE

SNIFFLE
ズビー
EH?
AH.
SHOCK
ビクッ
HOLD ON!! ARE YOU CRYING .....!?
WHAT MIGHT YOU BE DOING WAY OUT HERE.....?
CLACK
カシャ
I SAW THIS CAT AND HER BABIES..... AND I STARTED CRYING FOR SOME REASON.....
RIGHT... IT WAS JUST ...
YANK
ピン
RUB
ごしごし
.....
A LITTLE EMOTIONALLY UNSTABLE, HUH...
FWUMP
ドサッ
THIS IS NOTHING NEW. HE'S ALWAYS BEEN WORRYING US WITH HIS MYSTERIOUS INJURIES.
YOU MUST BE CONCERNED ABOUT *HIM* AGAIN.
BUT... A CAT AT SUNSET, HUH...
..... THAT TAKES ME BACK.
I DON'T NEED ANYONE ELSE WORRYING ABOUT ME NOW.
KEEP THIS A SECRET FROM RIKO AND THE KIDS.
.....
RIGHT .....

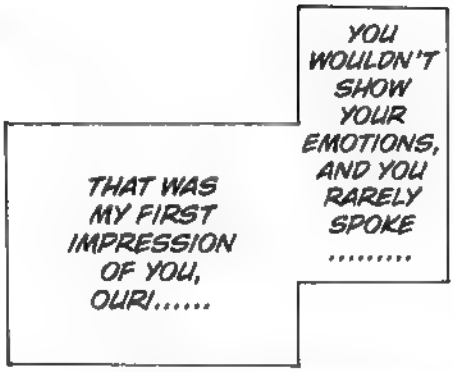
.....
EH?

YOU DON'T REMEMBER?
BECAUSE YOU WERE SO YOUNG BACK THEN.
I'M TALKING ABOUT WHEN YOU FIRST JOINED US.

THERE WAS A BEAUTIFUL SUNSET LIKE THIS ONE EVENING WHEN YOU, ME, AND KEISEI WENT HOME TO DAI-RIN.

.....
.....
I PICKED THIS LITTLE GUY UP.
UMM... TAGAMI .....
THAT'S NOT AN ANIMAL, YOU KNOW.
.....
AGAIN...?
YEAH, I GOT IT, KEIKO-SAN. YOU'RE STARTING TO GET FROWN LINES...
SHUT UP.
THIS HAPPENS ALL THE TIME.
I WON'T GO AND ASK HOW IT WAS YOU FOUND THIS ONE, BUT...
...NO HALF MEASURES. YOU NEED TO TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY, WHATEVER THAT MEANS.
.....

OR HOW TO USE DISHES OR WEAR CLOTHING..... WORST OF ALL, YOU COULDN'T EVEN USE A TOILET.....
IT'S NOT JUST THAT YOU DIDN'T EMOTE. YOU DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO.
YOU WEREN'T EVEN LIKE OTHER CHILDREN WHO SHOW SIMILAR SYMPTOMS ...
YOU DIDN'T UNDER-STAND THE BASIC EMO-TIONS.


YOU WOULDN'T SHOW YOUR EMOTIONS, AND YOU RARELY SPOKE .....
THAT WAS MY FIRST IMPRESSION OF YOU, OURI.....

BUT AFTER A FEW DAYS, I REALIZED THAT I WAS WRONG...

THEY WERE DEAD .....
YOUR EYES ALWAYS LOOKED AS DEAD AS A CORPSE'S...

EVEN WHEN KEISEI TAUGHT YOU HOW TO USE BASIC TOOLS, ONE BY ONE.....
... NOTHING CHANGED IN YOUR EYES.

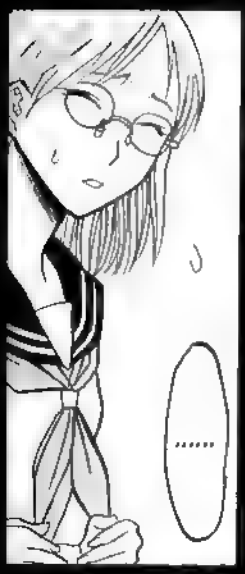
YOU HAD AN ENCOUNTER THAT BEGAN CHANGING YOU.
BUT THEN, ONE DAY.....

... TO ME ...
THOSE EYES WERE A LITTLE SCARY.

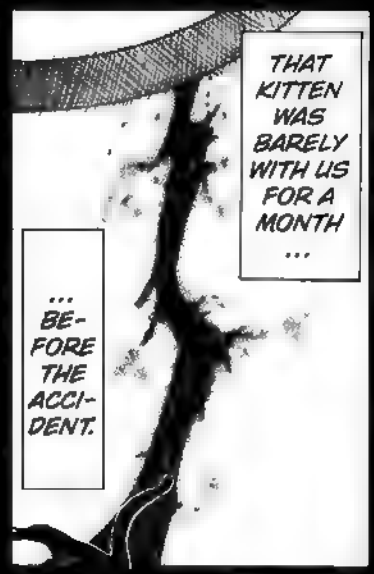
.....
YOU PICK HIM UP SOME-WHERE ?
HMM?
MEW!
.....
NO.
HE WAS ALWAYS AT THE RIVER.. THAT'S WHY.....
ALL..... ALONE.
MEOW
THIS WAS THE FIRST LIFE OTHER THAN YOUR OWN THAT YOU WERE DRAWN TO.
YOU HAD NEVER SHOWN AN INTEREST IN THE OTHER CHILDREN.
YOU FOUND A KITTEN, OURI.
RIGHT. SO YOU PICKED HIM UP, LIKE I SAID.
...KEISEI AND I WERE THRILLED, BECAUSE IT SEEMED LIKE PROOF THAT YOU WERE ADAPTING TO LIFE.
...I HON-ESTLY DIDN'T KNOW, BUT...
AS FOR WHY YOU HAP-PENED TO BE INTER-ESTED IN THAT KITTEN ...

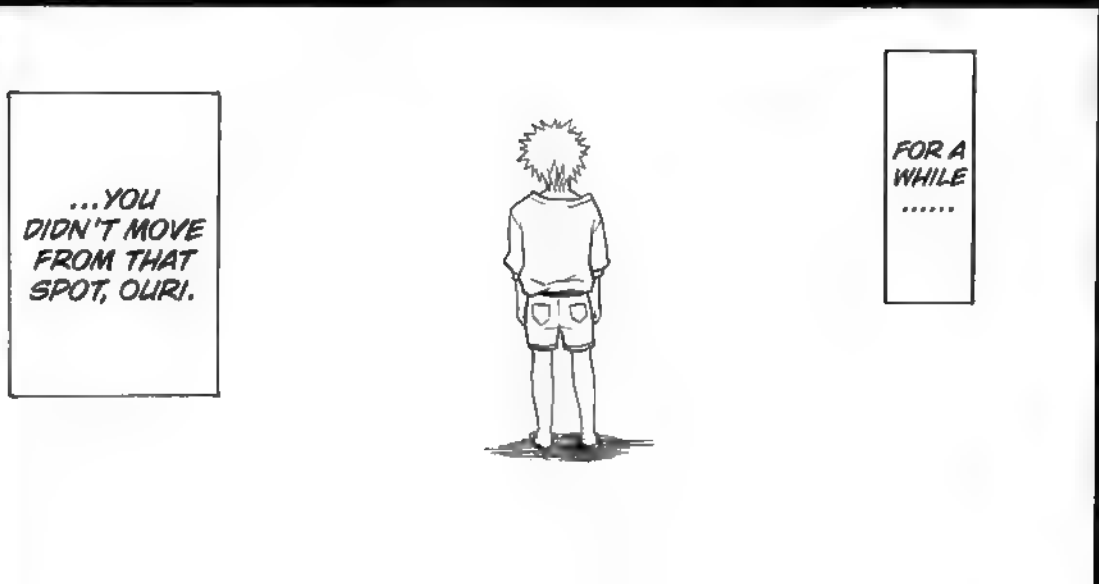
YOU WERE STILL CLUMSY, BUT YOU CARED FOR THAT KITTEN. AND YOU ACTED LIKE IT.
...FROM THEN ON, YOU BEGAN TO CHANGE IN BIG WAYS, OURI.
AND SURE ENOUGH .....
BUT THEN...
...YOU SLOWLY BEGAN TO COME INTO YOUR OWN. I WAS SURE OF IT.
THROUGH YOUR CONTACT WITH THAT LITTLE ANIMAL ...
TRUE, YOU STILL WOULDN'T SHOW ANY EMOTIONS, BUT...

KEISEI..... HOW DID THIS.....?
.....
THIS MORNING I HEARD OURI MURMURING THAT HE COULDN'T FIND IT. I FEARED THE WORST...AND WENT LOOKING...
.....LET'S HOLD A LITTLE SERVICE..... I'LL GET THE TOOLS.
YOU FIND GLOVES AND SOME SHOVELS, RIKO.
..... OKAY.


.....

WHAT WERE YOU THINKING WHEN YOU SAW THE KITTEN CHANGE FROM "LIFE" TO SOMETHING LIFELESS .....?


THAT KITTEN WAS BARELY WITH US FOR A MONTH ...
... BE-FORE THE ACCI-DENT.


...YOU DIDN'T MOVE FROM THAT SPOT, OURI.
FOR A WHILE .....

RIKO..... YOU SEEN OURI?
CLATTER
OH..... NO.....
HE WAS HERE UNTIL A MOMENT AGO.....
!
HMM ...?
OURI?
THE KITTEN'S BODY .....
IT'S GONE.
DID HE...?

SCRAPE
SCRAPE
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
DRIP
.....
SCRAPE
.....KUH.
...UHH...

CRUNCH
HERE YOU ARE, OURI.
YOU TRYING TO BURY HIM ALL ON YOUR OWN?
I FOUND THE CAT HERE.....
.....
IT'S JUST...
I...
WIPE
RUB
RUB
SO I CAN..... VISIT HIM AGAIN .....
SO..... I WANTED TO BURY HIM HERE .....

CAN I HELP YOU OUT?
IS THAT ALL?
I SEE.
..... OKAY.
RUSTLE
!
.....
AND CRY FOR THEM.
.....
...IS REMEMBER THEM.
IT'S NO GOOD TO HOLD BACK.
ALL WE CAN DO FOR THOSE WHO'VE DIED...

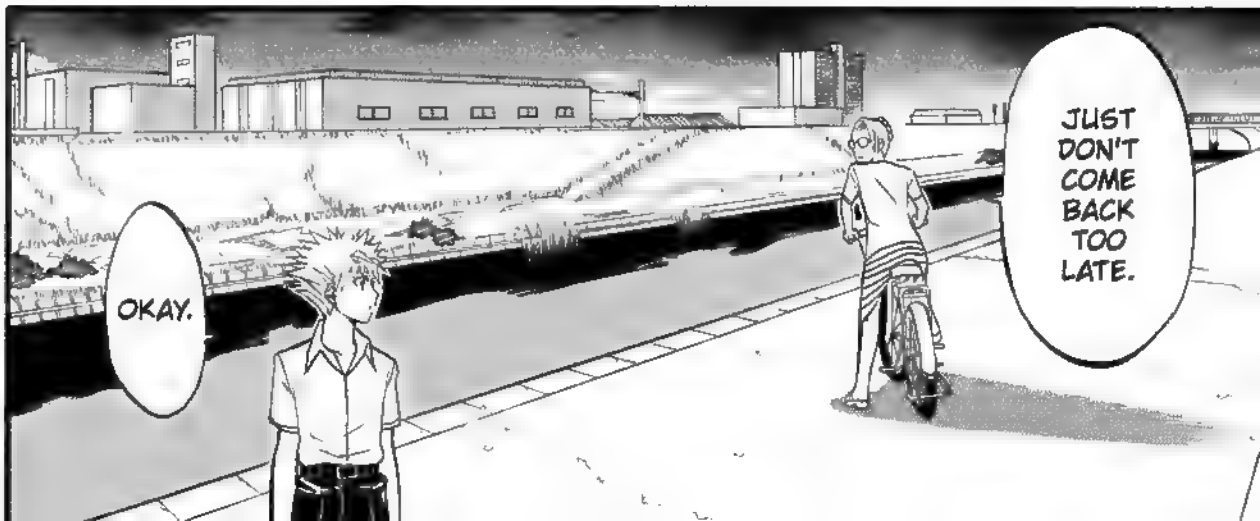
AHHH-
HHHH.
.....
UGH.
UWAHH-
HHH...
UWAH-
HHH...

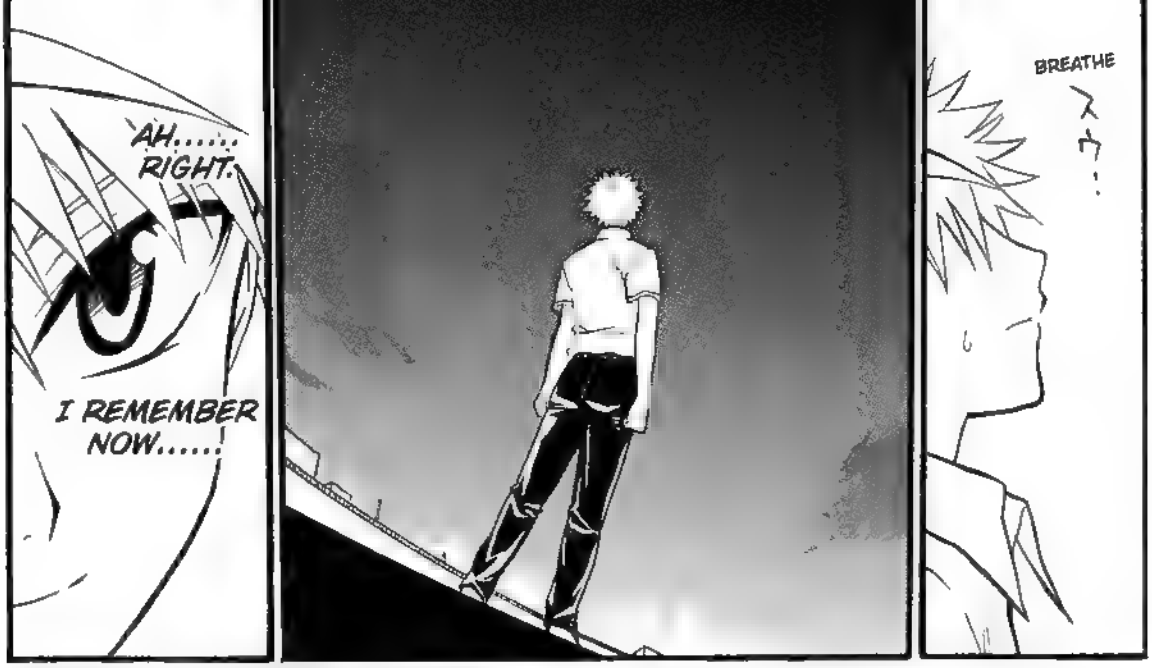
FOR SOME REASON I'M FEELING REALLY EMBARRASSED NOW...
...OH BOY...
FRET
FRET
THAT SO? OH, I'VE GOT PLENTY OF EMBARRASSING STORIES LEFT IN ME.
HEE HEE HEE.
UMM ...
NO THANKS.
IS THAT RIGHT?
THAT DAY... THERE WAS A SUNSET JUST LIKE THIS ONE.
I REMEMBER THE THREE OF US HOLDING HANDS AND WALKING HOME.
TOO BAD.
PAT
PAT
I GUESS I'M JUST USED TO WORRYING TOO MUCH ABOUT KEISEI AND HIS WOUNDS.
BUT I WAS LIKE YOU TOO, AT FIRST.
AFTER ALL THIS TIME...
HE'S NEVER ONCE GIVEN ME AN EXPLANATION FOR ANY OF IT.....
SENSEI .....
.....

POINT
EH?
IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY, ISN'T IT?
AND EVERY-ONE'S BEEN GETTING READY FOR TOMOR-ROW.
SO WE NEED YOU BACK TO YOUR OLD SELF!
OH YEAH.
.....
WHEN YOU'RE GLOOMY, THE OTHER CHILDREN TEND TO BE DOWN IN THE DUMPS!!
WELL. GET YOUR WORRIES OUT AND CHEER UP ALREADY, YOUNG MAN!!
SPIT
SLAP
PFFT !!

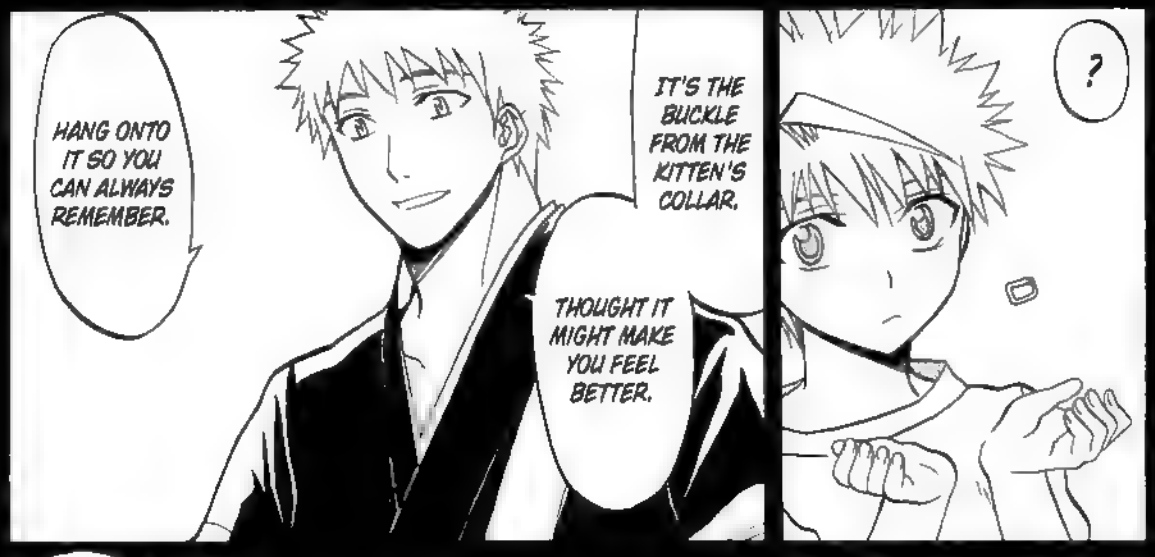
I'VE JUST BEEN SO BUSY WITH BIG BRO THAT I HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO THINK ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE.....I GUESS.
SOME-THING LIKE THAT.
AH, SORRY.
UWAH
UGH.
TWIRL TWIRL
WE'VE BEEN WORKING OUR BUTTS OFF SINCE YESTERDAY !!
SERIOUSLY .....? ARE YOU TELLING ME... ...YOU FORGOT?

FINE.
SMILE
SORRY ABOUT THAT.
S—


OKAY.
JUST DON'T COME BACK TOO LATE.


AH..... RIGHT.
I REMEMBER NOW.....
BREATHE
スウ…

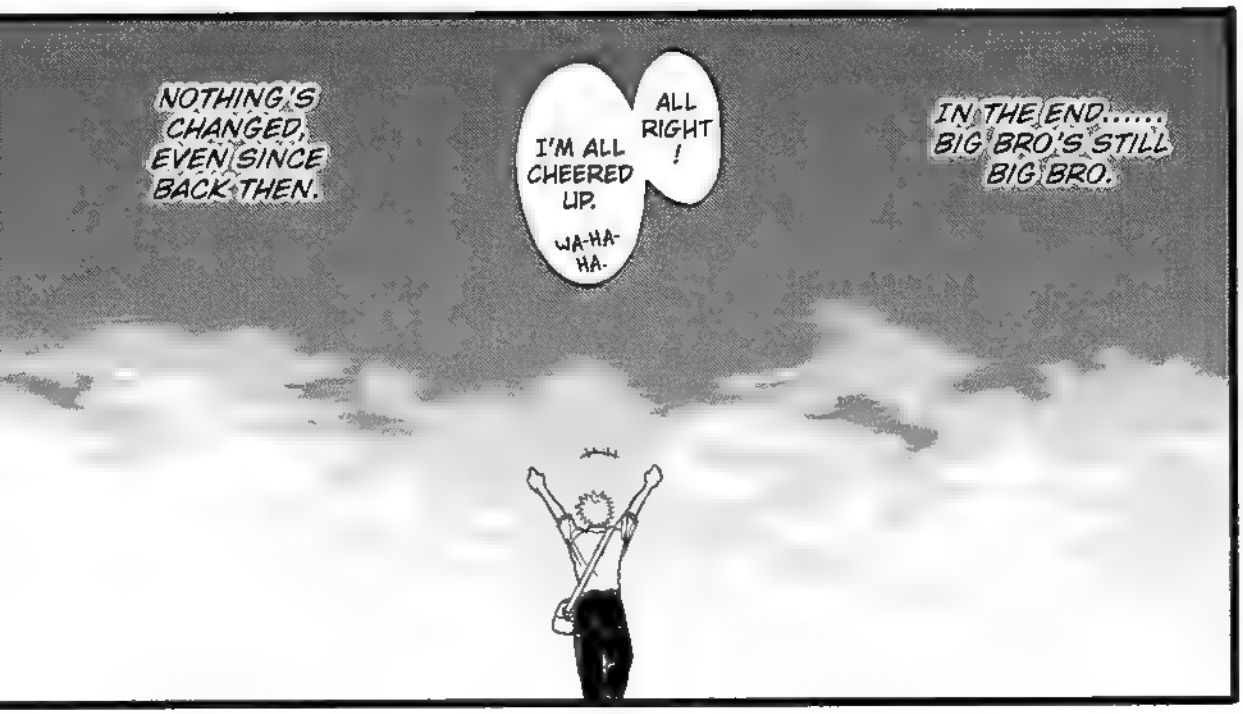
OURI.


HANG ONTO IT SO YOU CAN ALWAYS REMEMBER.
IT'S THE BUCKLE FROM THE KITTEN'S COLLAR.
THOUGHT IT MIGHT MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER.
?

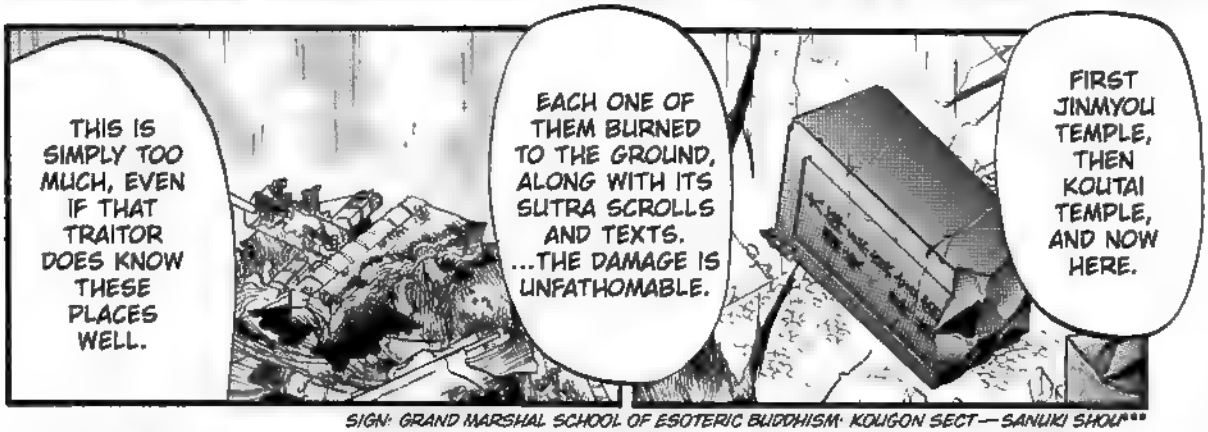
YOU EVER FEEL THIS WAY? .....THE WAY I'M FEELING RIGHT NOW.
HMM ?
BIG BRO KEI.
.....

.....
OF COURSE.
EVEN MORE THAN OTHER PEOPLE ...
...MONKS DEAL WITH DEATH A LOT. WE THINK ABOUT IT A LOT.
EVEN SO, THOUGH ...
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I FACE IT.....I STILL END UP CRYING SOMETIMES.
I'LL NEVER REALLY GET USED TO THE IDEA OF DEATH...
THAT'S WHY WHENEVER I MEET SOMEONE DEALING WITH THE PAIN OF LOSS...
I ALWAYS WANNA HELP EASE THAT PAIN.
THAT'S THE REASON I BECAME A MONK IN THE FIRST PLACE.
... WHO-OPS.
GUESS THAT'S A LITTLE COMPLICATED FOR YOU?

...AND I KNEW ABOUT HOSHIMURA-SAN'S PAIN, I KNOW I'D ALSO END UP HELPING HER.....
RIGHT... IF I WERE BIG BRO.....
.....

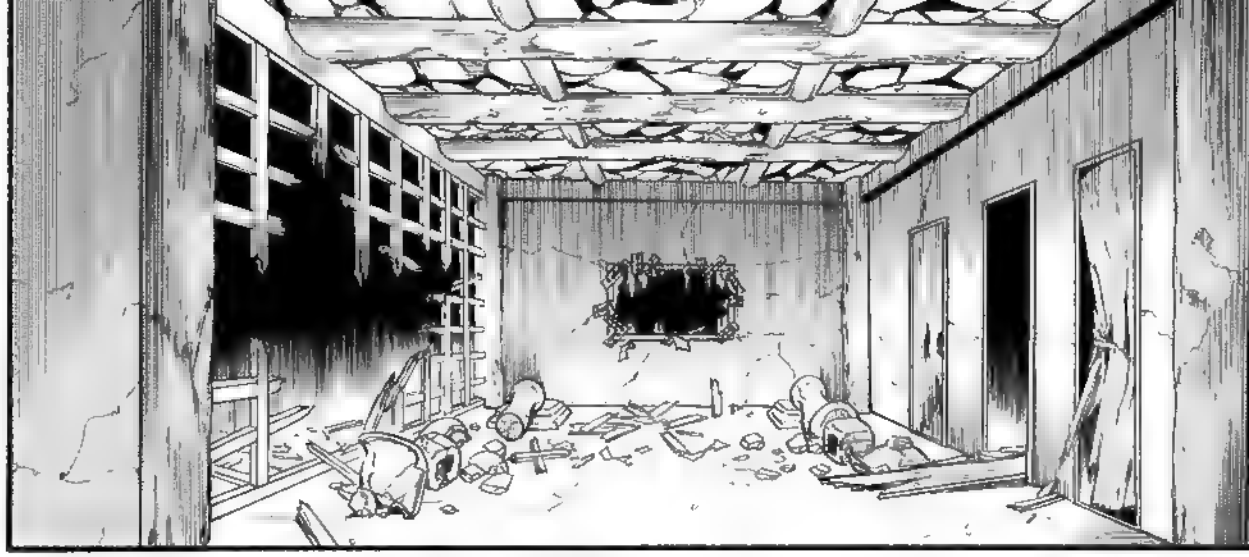

NOTHING'S CHANGED, EVEN SINCE BACK THEN.
I'M ALL CHEERED UP. WA-HA-HA.
ALL RIGHT!
IN THE END..... BIG BRO'S STILL BIG BRO.

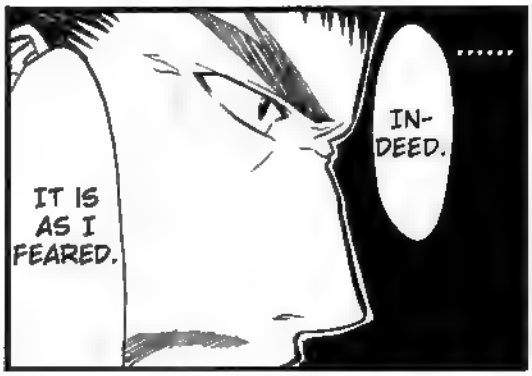
FSSSHHH

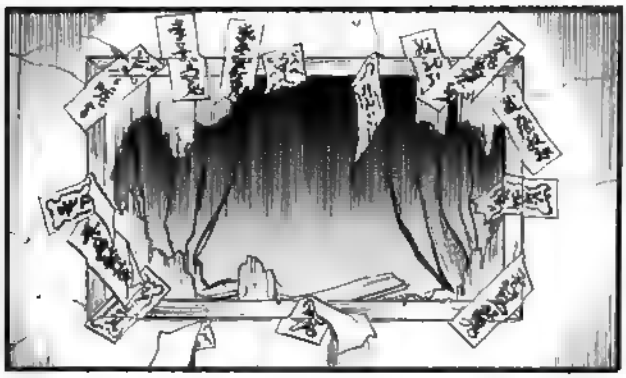

THIS IS SIMPLY TOO MUCH, EVEN IF THAT TRAITOR DOES KNOW THESE PLACES WELL.
EACH ONE OF THEM BURNED TO THE GROUND, ALONG WITH ITS SUTRA SCROLLS AND TEXTS. ...THE DAMAGE IS UNFATHOMABLE.
FIRST JINMYOU TEMPLE, THEN KOUTAI TEMPLE, AND NOW HERE.

*SIGN: GRAND MARSHAL SCHOOL OF ESOTERIC BUDDHISM· KOUGON SECT— SANUKI SHOJI****

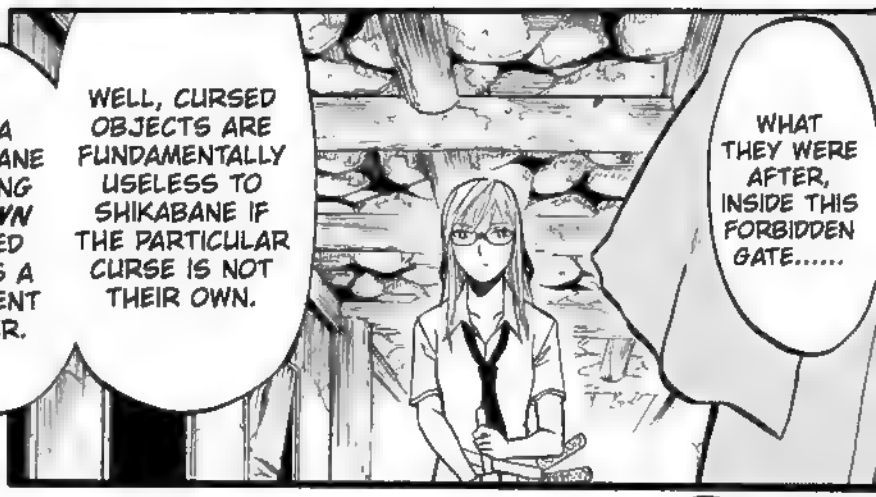
HMPH..... THEIR THOROUGH-NESS HAS MADE THEIR TRUE GOAL THAT MUCH CLEARER.
IN THIS UNDERGROUND SEALED CHAMBER WERE STORED CURSED OBJECTS AND OTHERS WITH INTERESTING HISTORIES.
THE FOR-BIDDEN GATE.
THE ITEMS WERE ALL BUT USELESS TO US, BUT IT SEEMS THEY CAME HERE TO STEAL THEM BEFORE STARTING THE FIRES.
CRUNCH
NO..... WHAT I'M IMAGINING IS TRULY TERRIFYING .....
AND NO SHIKABANE WOULD MAKE THE JOURNEY TO SHIKOKU FOR THE SAKE OF A HUMAN.
TO BEGIN WITH..... I EXPECT THE ONLY MEMBER OF THE UNCLEAN BUNCH WHO COULD MAKE ANY USE OF THE DAISHI'S STOLEN SUTRAS IS AKASHA HIMSELF.....
?
HOW DO YOU MEAN?
SHIKOKU.....
SANUKI.....
A BEING WITH LINGERING REGRETS.
STEP
STEP
WHICH MEANS.....
CLATTER
CRUMBLE
CRUMBLE
BY FOCUSING ON THE TRAITOR MONK, WE OVERLOOKED CERTAIN POSSIBILITIES ...
THE SUTRAS HERE WERE BURNED INTENTIONALLY TO OBSCURE WHAT WAS STOLEN.
KICK




IT IS AS I FEARED.
IN-DEED.
.....

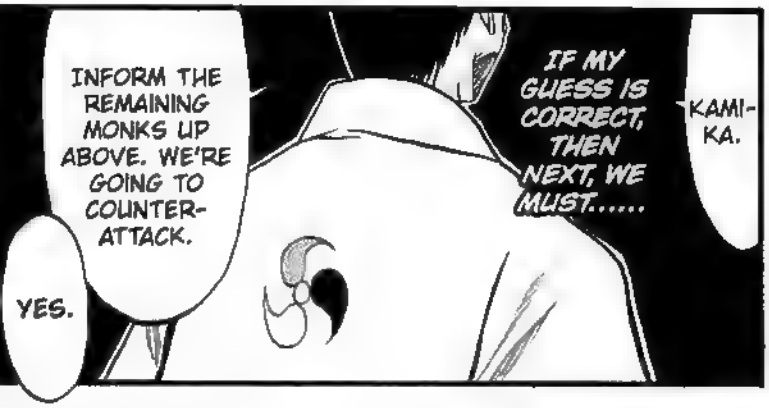


!
BUT A SHIKABANE WIELDING HIS *OWN* CURSED ITEM IS A DIFFERENT MATTER.


WELL, CURSED OBJECTS ARE FUNDAMENTALLY USELESS TO SHIKABANE IF THE PARTICULAR CURSE IS NOT THEIR OWN.
WHAT THEY WERE AFTER, INSIDE THIS FORBIDDEN GATE.....

AND...
...THE ONLY ONE I CAN IMAGINE THE UNCLEAN BUNCH SHOWING SUCH ALLEGIENCE TO IS.....
YES... *HIM*.
THE SHIKABANE WHOSE CURSED ITEMS WERE SEALED HERE, IN THIS VERY CHAMBER.

THE CURSED ITEMS STORED IN THE DEEPEST PART OF THE FORBIDDEN GATE BELONG TO THE UNCLEAN BUNCH'S KING HIMSELF.....!!
THE "KING" .....!!


INFORM THE REMAINING MONKS UP ABOVE. WE'RE GOING TO COUNTER-ATTACK.
YES.
IF MY GUESS IS CORRECT, THEN NEXT, WE MUST.....
KAMI-KA.

.....
THE KING ...

A BLACK... FEATHER.....? A CROW'S?
WHAT THE.....?

SOU-JOU-SAMA.

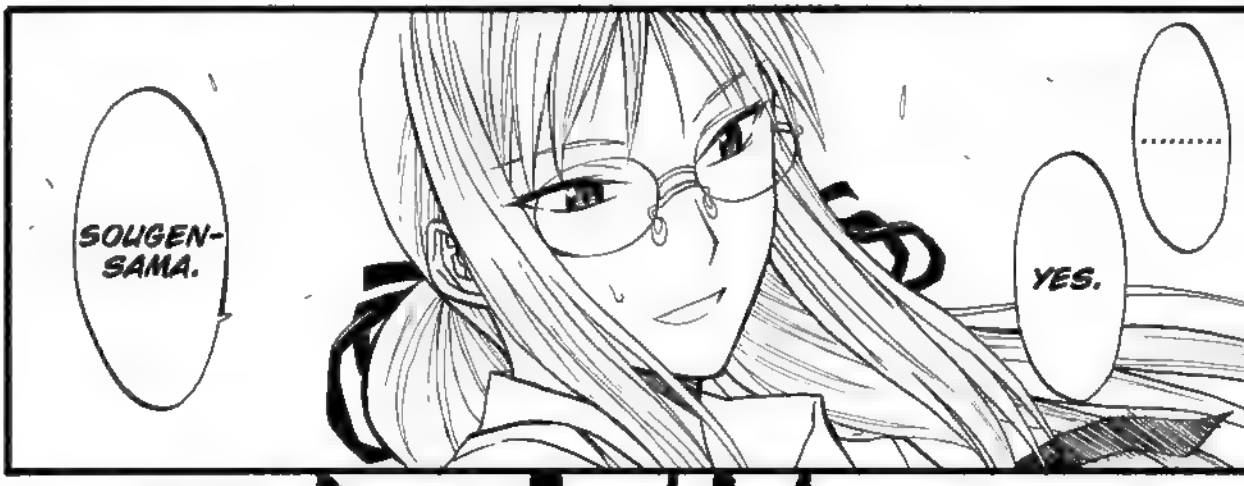
!
GRAB
FLUTTER

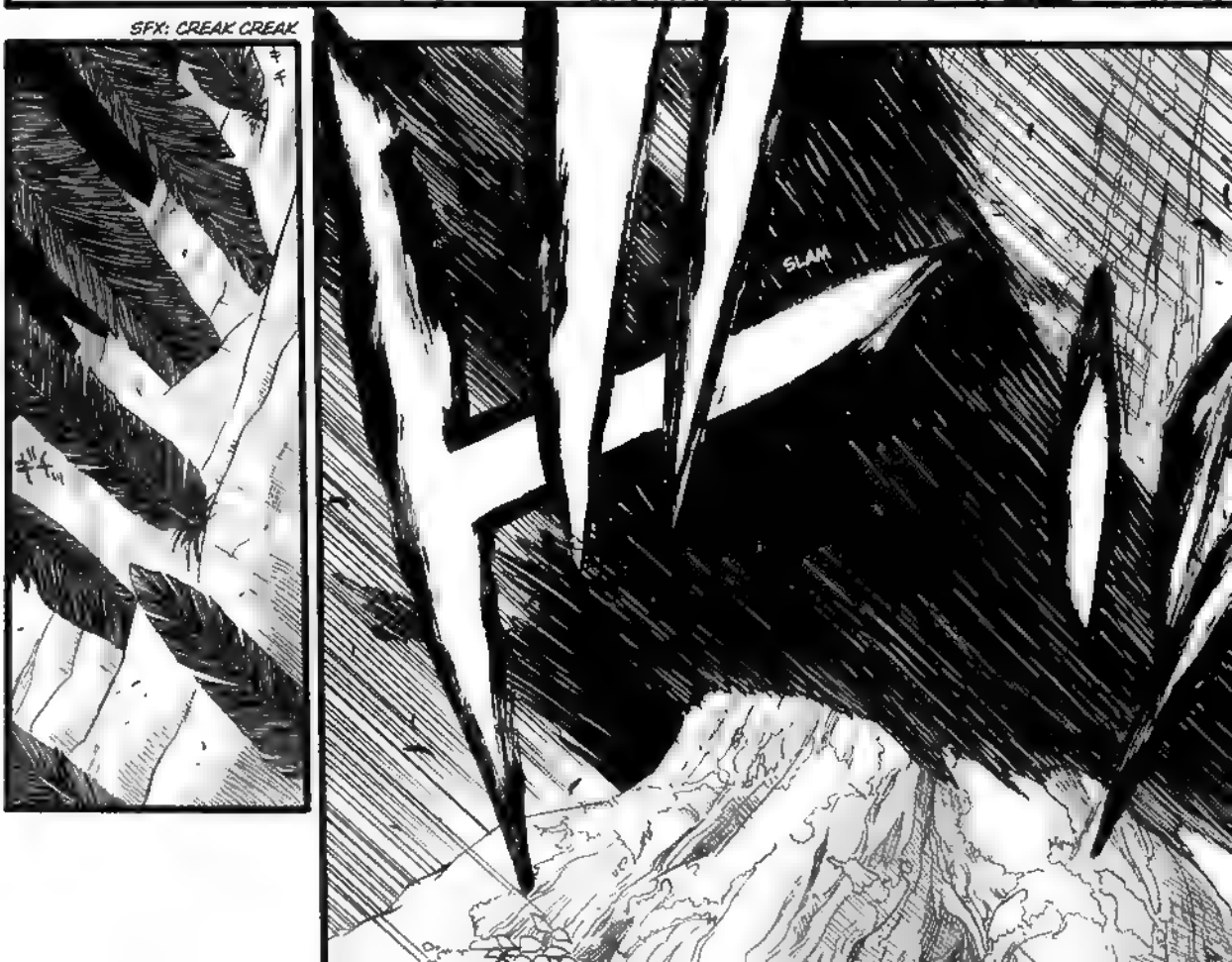
!?
BAM

NO... THIS IS.....
A FOREST...!? OR AN ILLUSION ...?

FSSHH
STAY ON GUARD ...
FSSHH
WE'RE ALREADY IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST.
SOME SHIKABANE HAVE THE ABILITY TO CREATE SEALED-OFF SPACES, LIKE AN ELEVATOR OR AN APARTMENT. THEN THEY DRAG THEIR PREY INSIDE.....
IT'S A "LO-CALE."
SOU-JOU-SAMA!
SHINK
LEAP
!!
SLAM
!
RUSH
A BLACK WATERFALL .....?
NO.... THEY'RE FEATHERS.
TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH

FSSHH
FSSHH
THEY'RE AFTER US.
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
NO MATTER.
SHOW THEM WHY YOU'RE CALLED THE STRONGEST CORPSE PRINCESS.

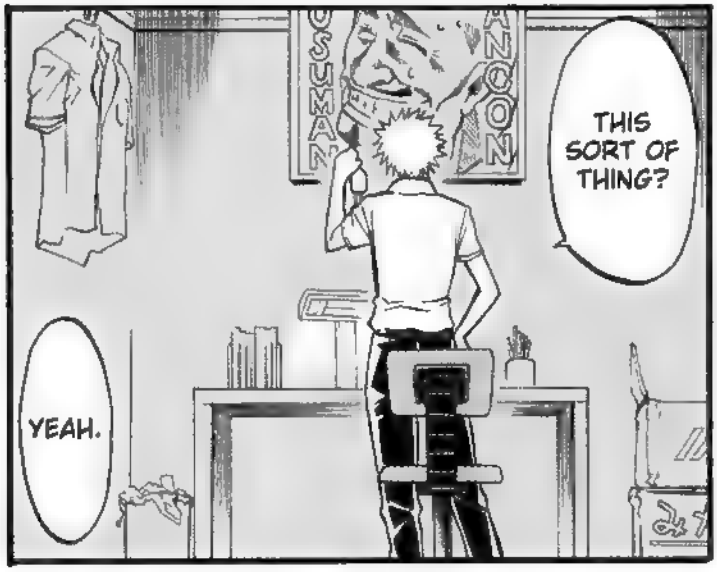

.....
YES.
SOUGEN-SAMA.


SFX: CREAK CREAK
SLAM

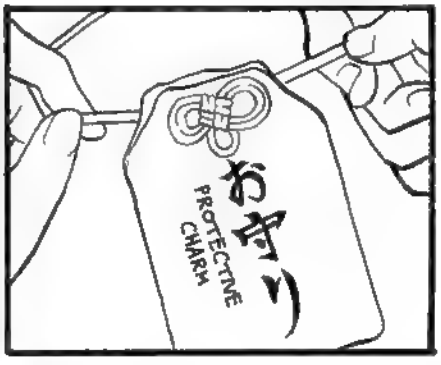
SLICE

FSSSHHH
CLAK
CLAK
CLAK
FSSHH
FSSHH
!
FLAP
FLAP
...“BLADE PRINCESS.”
NO WONDER THEY CALL YOU...
RUFFLE
RUFFLE
RUFFLE
TO CUT EACH AND EVERY ONE OF MY THOUSANDS OF FEATHERS...
WONDER-FUL.
A MASS OF CROW SPIRITS, MAYBE?
WE ...?
WE WILL BE PUTTING AN END TO YOU HERE.
ONE OF THE UNCLEAN BUNCH'S SWARM.
FSSHH
FSSHH
MY NAME IS EJIN.
ALLOW ME TO INTRO-DUCE MYSELF.

THUMP
!!
SOME STRAYS, ALONG WITH THE MURDERED MONKS' CORPSES
.....
TCH.
TO LET ONE'S REGRETS TAKE HOLD... THEIR FAITH MUST HAVE BEEN LACKING
.....
THIS GUY..... FROM THE VERY START.....
BUT SHOULD YOU BREAK PAST AND COME AT ME.....WHAT THEN?
I NEED BUT A BIT MORE OF YOUR TIME.
WELL... IF YOU GO ALL-OUT, I DON'T SUPPOSE ANY NUMBER OF THESE CRETINS COULD MEASURE UP.


THIS SORT OF THING?
YEAH.

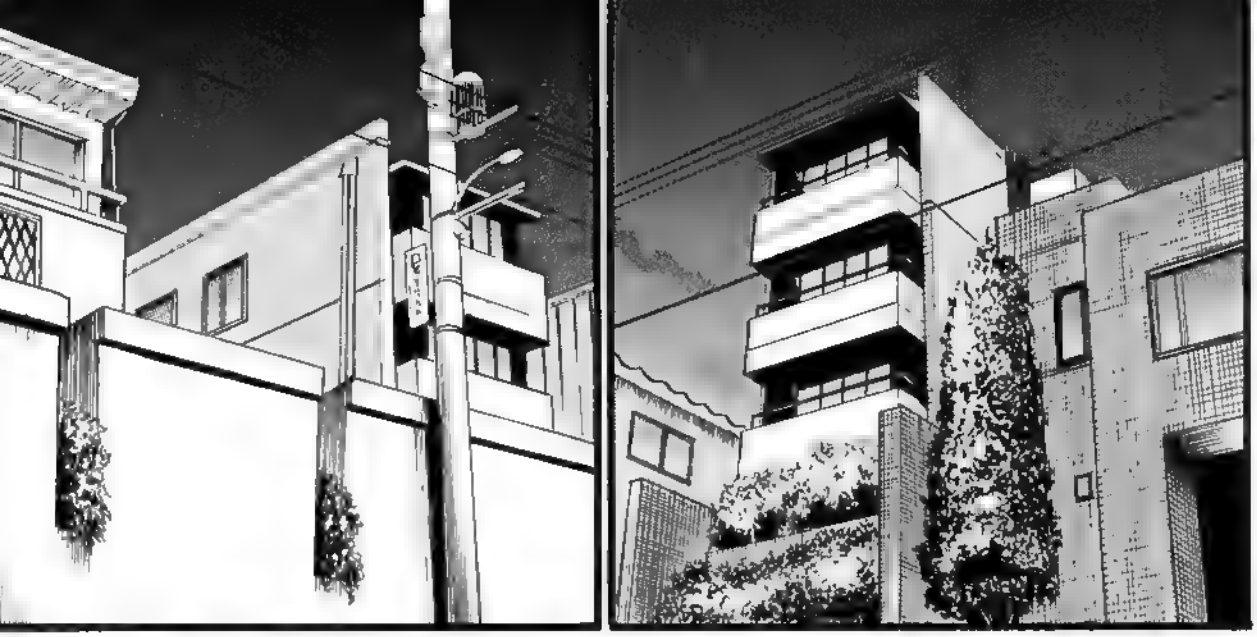
101 花神
SIGN: KAGAMI

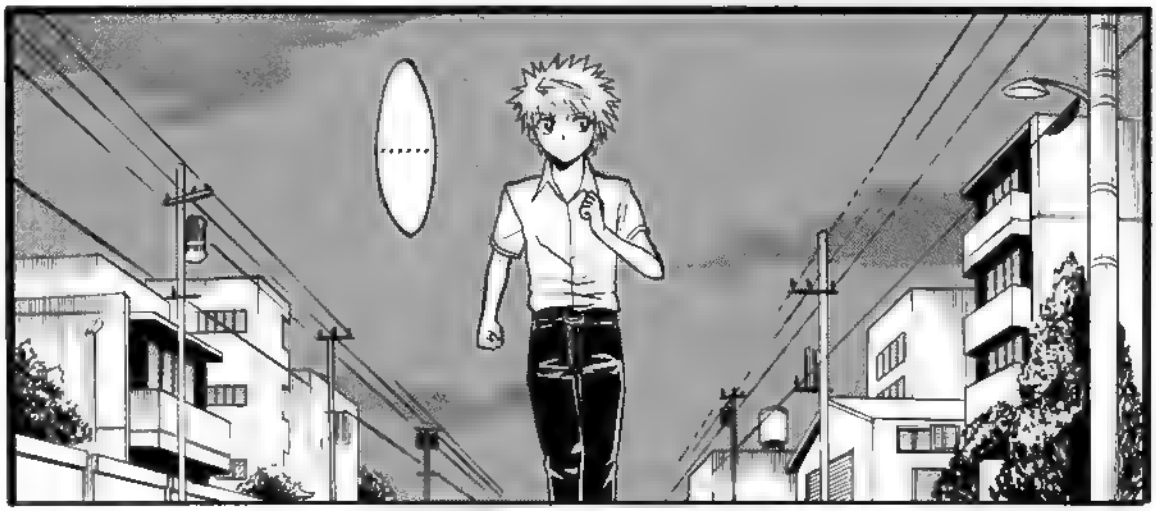

お守り
PROTECTIVE CHARM

NO MATTER WHAT'S CHANGED, I KNOW WHAT I KNOW ABOUT HIM.....!
IT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH CORPSE PRINCESSES... OR BATTLES... OR ANYTHING.

ALL RIGHT.
BETTER HURRY UP AND DELIVER THIS.

...I'LL HAVE TO KEEP BELIEVING IN HIM AND CHEERING HIM ON.....
AS LONG AS BIG BRO'S STILL HIMSELF...

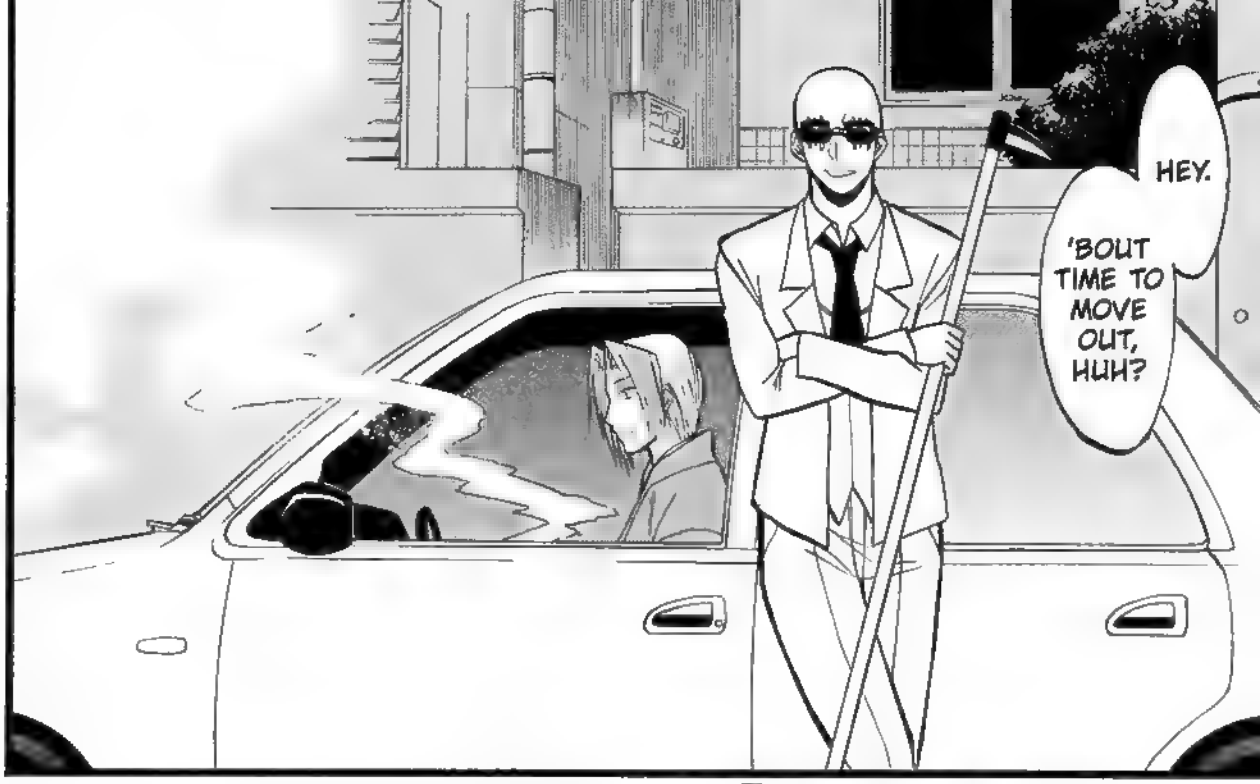


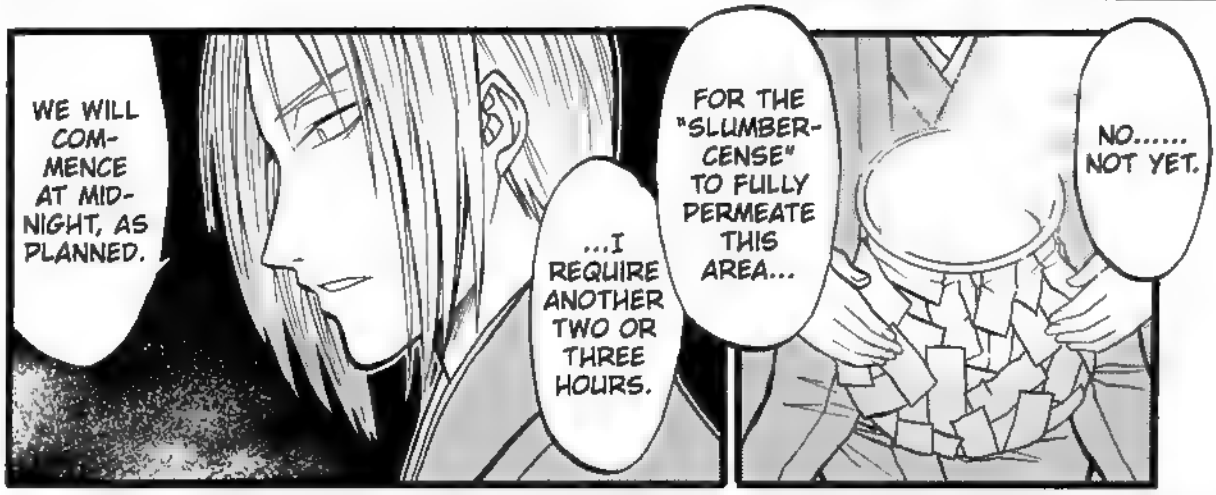

.....

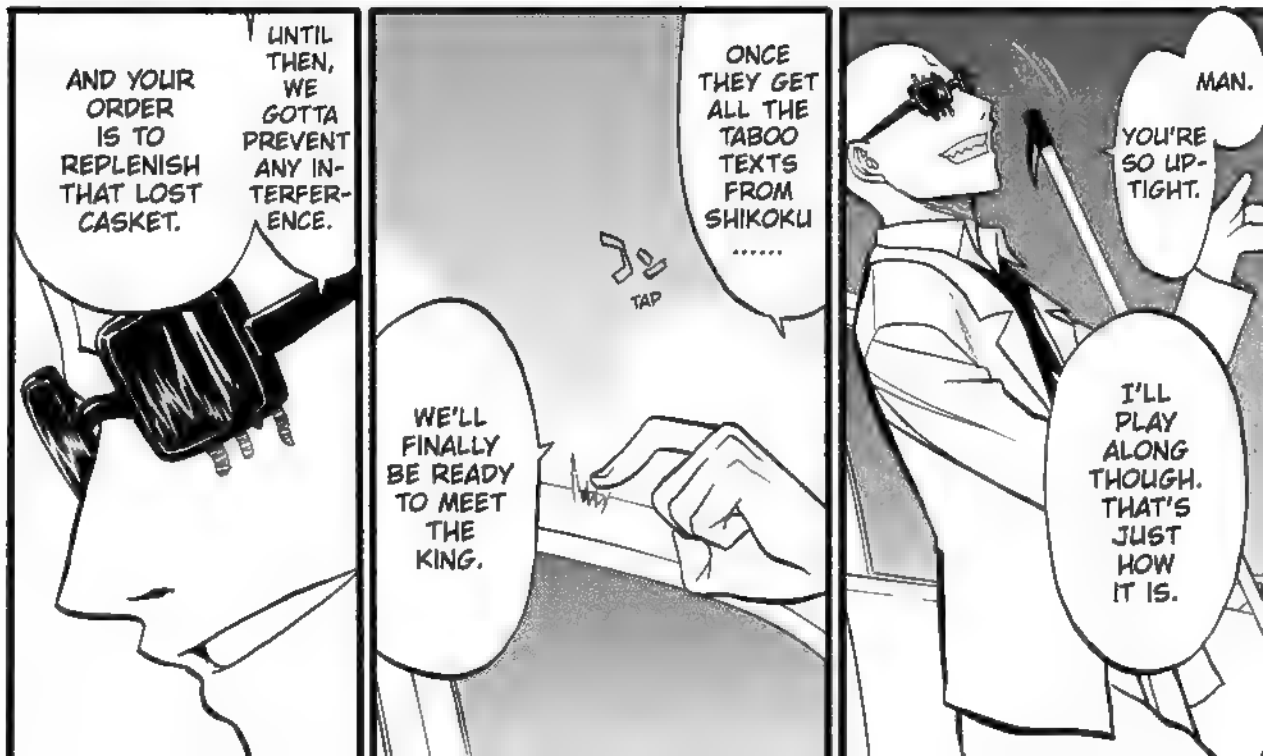
SNIFF
WHAT'S MORE..!.....

I'VE BEEN SMELLING SOME-THING SWEET .....

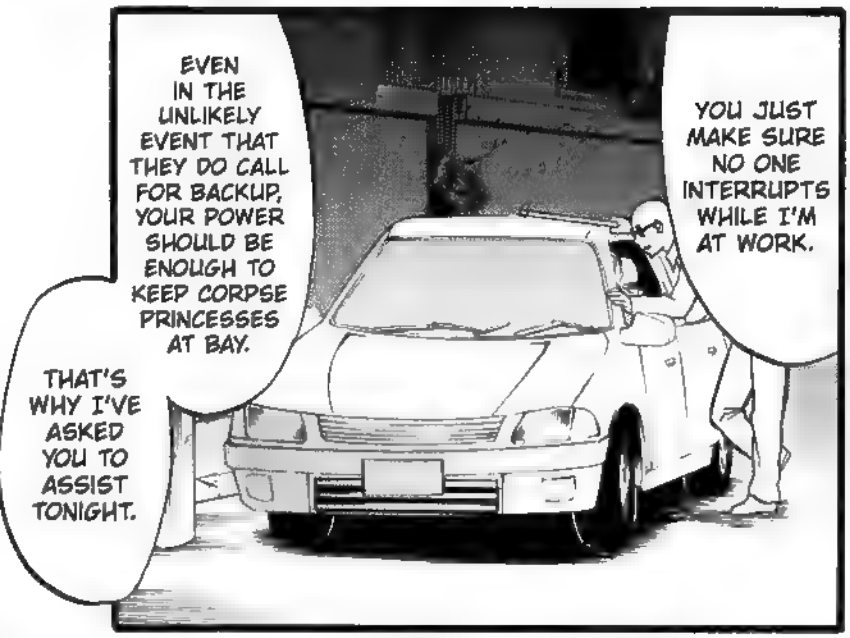
BARELY NINE P.M., AND THE WHOLE TOWN'S DEAD. I DON'T HEAR A PEEP..!....
WHAT THE.....? IT'S TOO QUIET.....


HEY.
'BOUT TIME TO MOVE OUT, HUH?

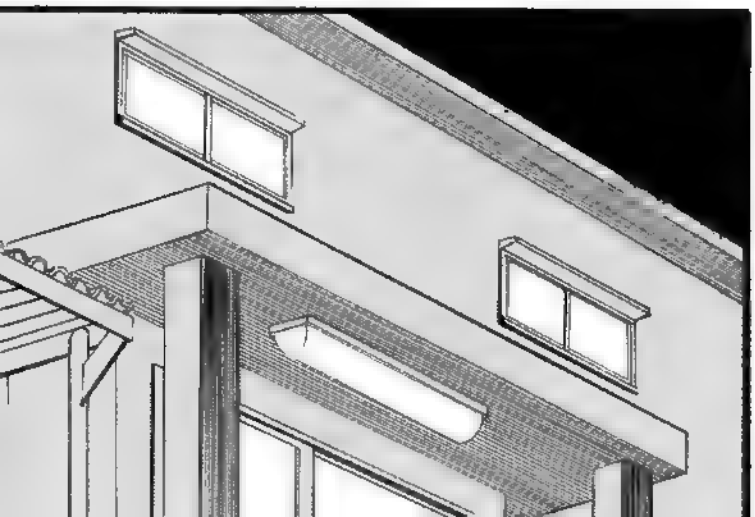

NO..... NOT YET.
FOR THE "SLUMBER-CENSE" TO FULLY PERMEATE THIS AREA...
...I REQUIRE ANOTHER TWO OR THREE HOURS.
WE WILL COM-MENCE AT MID-NIGHT, AS PLANNED.


MAN.
YOU'RE SO UP-TIGHT.
I'LL PLAY ALONG THOUGH. THAT'S JUST HOW IT IS.
ONCE THEY GET ALL THE TABOO TEXTS FROM SHIKOKU .....
TAP
WE'LL FINALLY BE READY TO MEET THE KING.
UNTIL THEN, WE GOTTA PREVENT ANY IN-TERFER-ENCE.
AND YOUR ORDER IS TO REPLENISH THAT LOST CASKET.

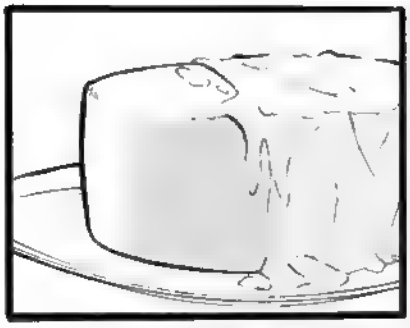
LOOM
LOOM
LOOM
THAT'S WHAT'S ON MY MIND, Y'SEE...
YOU REALLY GOT A WAY TO MAKE ANOTHER IN A SINGLE NIGHT?
SO!!
SLAM


EVEN IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THAT THEY DO CALL FOR BACKUP, YOUR POWER SHOULD BE ENOUGH TO KEEP CORPSE PRINCESSES AT BAY.
YOU JUST MAKE SURE NO ONE INTERRUPTS WHILE I'M AT WORK.
THAT'S WHY I'VE ASKED YOU TO ASSIST TONIGHT.

.....
YES, OF COURSE.

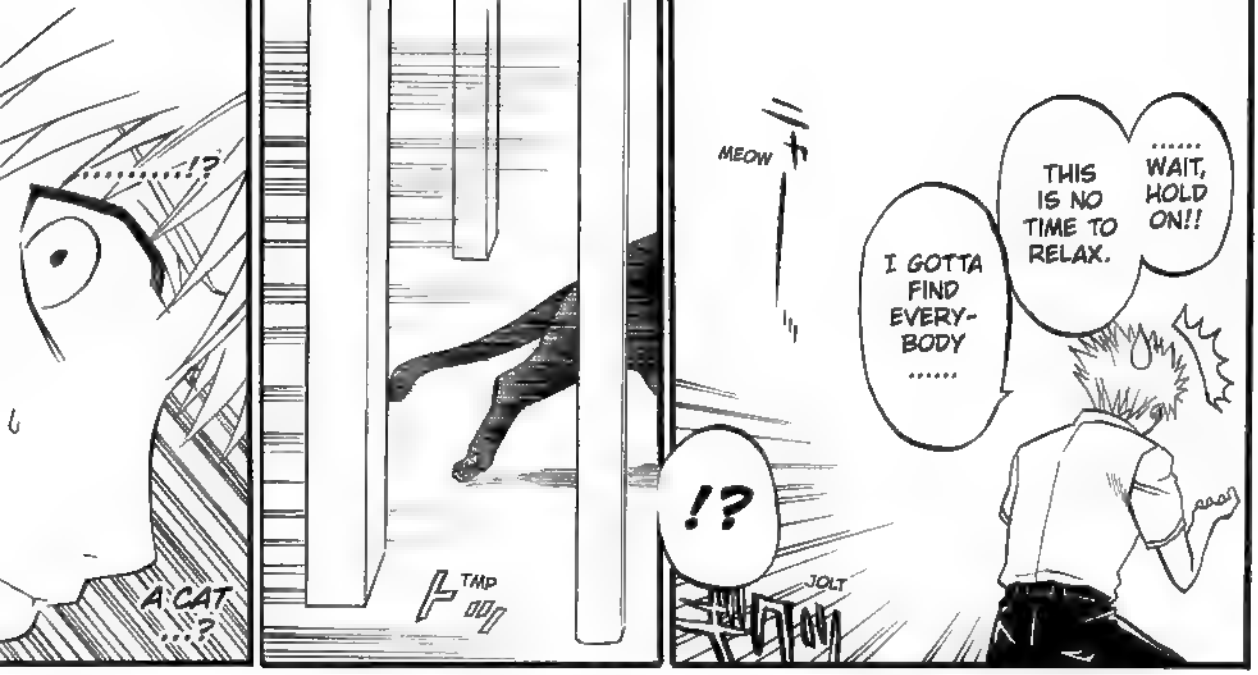


I'M COUNTING ON YOU, SHIMEN-SAN.
HEH.



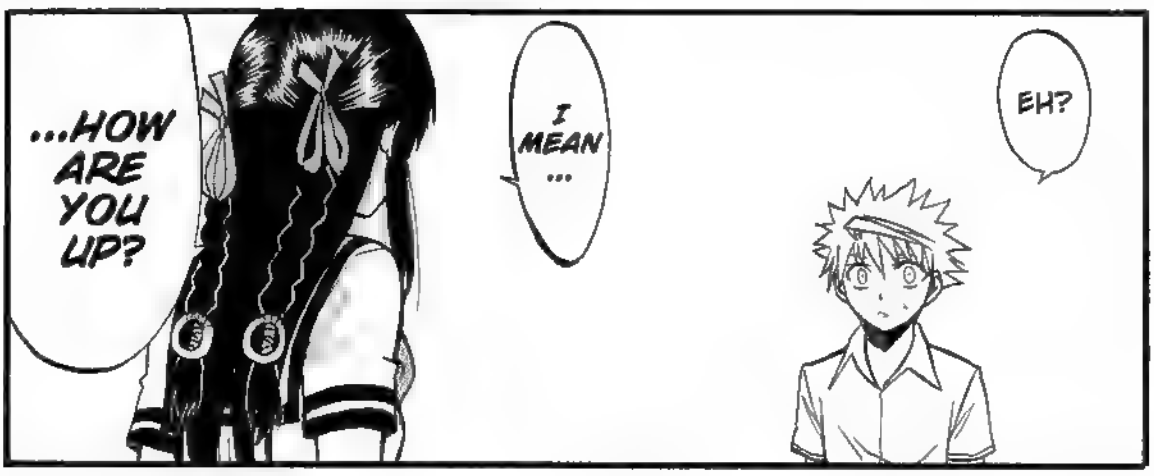
POSTER: HAPPY BIRTHDAY HANAGAMI

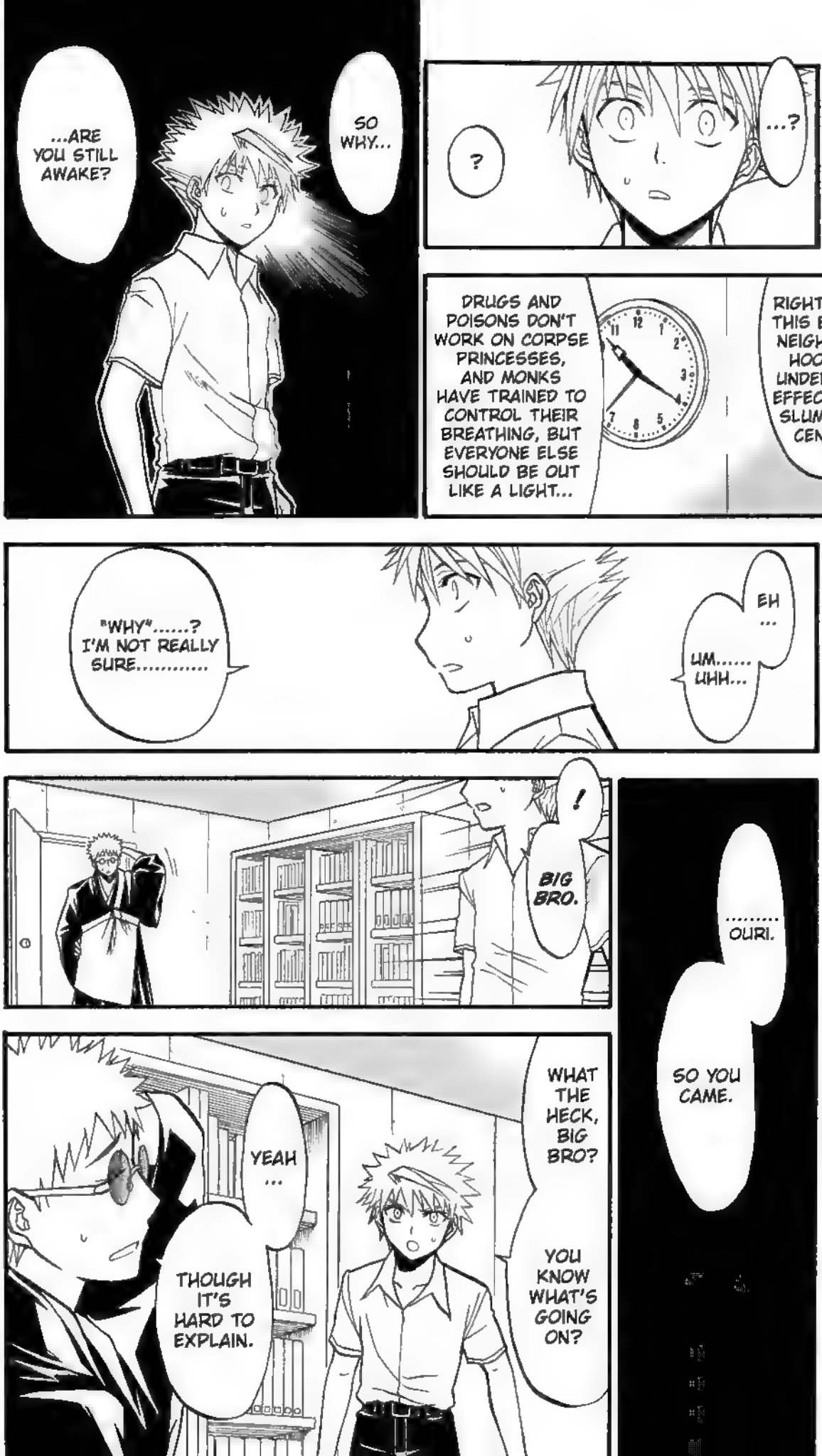
CRAYONS: RED/MAROON


.....!?
A CAT...?
TMP
MEOW
!?
JOLT
I GOTTA FIND EVERY-BODY.....
THIS IS NO TIME TO RELAX.
.....WAIT, HOLD ON!!

.....AH.
SIGH

.....
HOW ARE YOU HERE NOW?

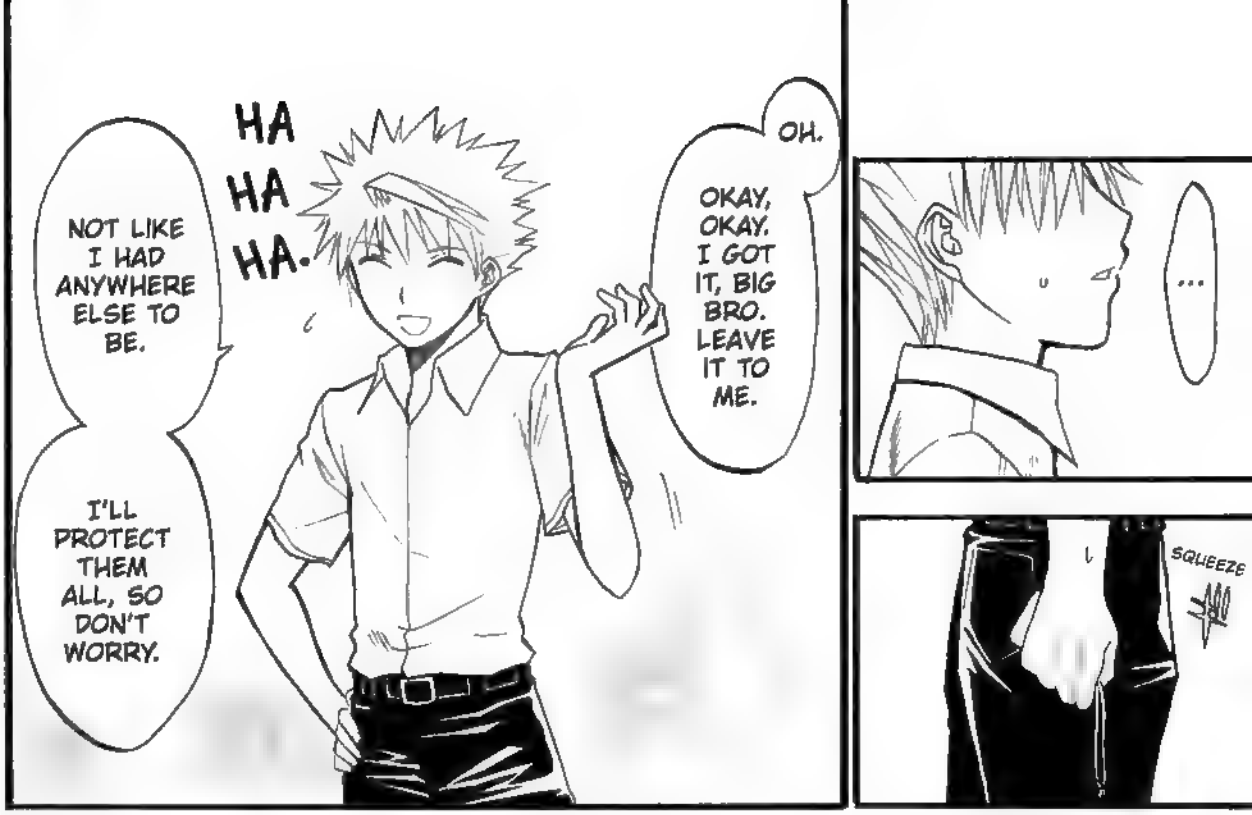

...HOW ARE YOU UP?
I MEAN...
EH?

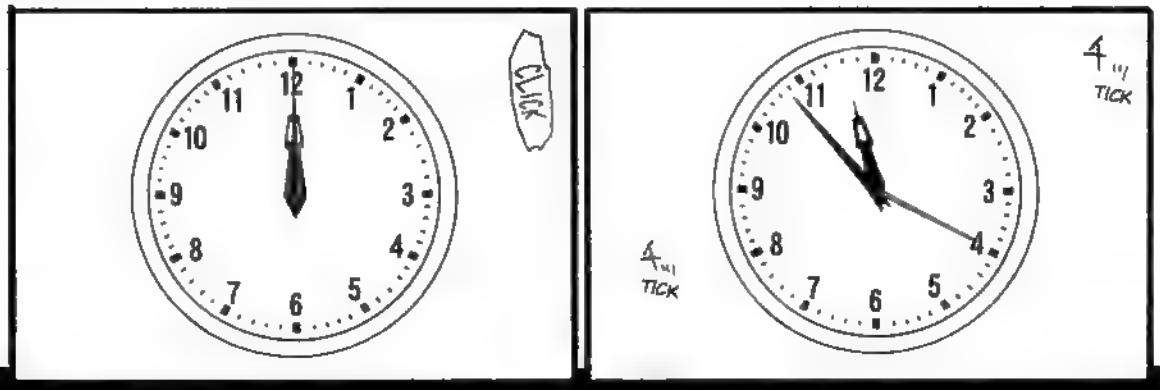

...ARE YOU STILL AWAKE?
SO WHY...
...?
?
DRUGS AND POISONS DON'T WORK ON CORPSE PRINCESSES, AND MONKS HAVE TRAINED TO CONTROL THEIR BREATHING, BUT EVERYONE ELSE SHOULD BE OUT LIKE A LIGHT...
RIGHT NOW, THIS ENTIRE NEIGHBORHOOD IS UNDER THE EFFECTS OF SLUMBERCENSE.
EH...
UM..... UHH...
"WHY".....? I'M NOT REALLY SURE.....
!
BIG BRO.
..... OURI.
SO YOU CAME.
WHAT THE HECK, BIG BRO?
YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON?
YEAH...
THOUGH IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN.

MAKINA!
..... ENEMY ?
THE ENEMY.
THEY'RE TARGETING THE ORPHANAGE.
!?
WE DON'T KNOW THEIR INTEN-TIONS YET, BUT...
...WHAT WE CAN SAY FOR SURE IS THAT THEY MEAN TO ATTACK ME AND KEISEI...!

NO...
IT'S FINE, MAKINA.
.....
YOU BEING HERE ISN'T PART OF THE PLAN.
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GET IN OUR WAY, GO HOME.

BIG BRO .....
EVERYONE'S IN THE BACK ROOM. YOU'LL BE OUR REAR GUARD IF ANYTHING HAPPENS.
SO, OURI.
.....
SENDING HIM HOME ALONE WOULD BE EVEN MORE DANGEROUS. IT'S NOT LIKE WE COULD ESCORT HIM.
THEY'RE OUT THERE RIGHT NOW, SOMEWHERE, LURKING.
KEI-SEI!


HA HA HA.
OH. OKAY, OKAY. I GOT IT, BIG BRO. LEAVE IT TO ME.
NOT LIKE I HAD ANYWHERE ELSE TO BE.
I'LL PROTECT THEM ALL, SO DON'T WORRY.
...
SQUEEZE

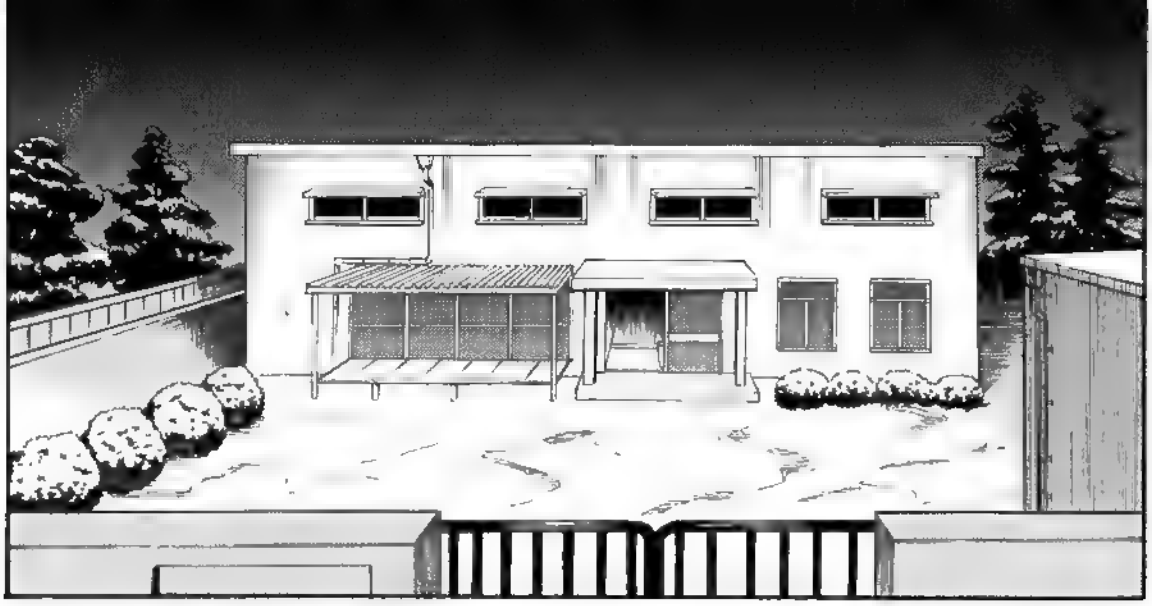


MIDNIGHT OF JULY 7TH OURI KAGAMI TURNS 16

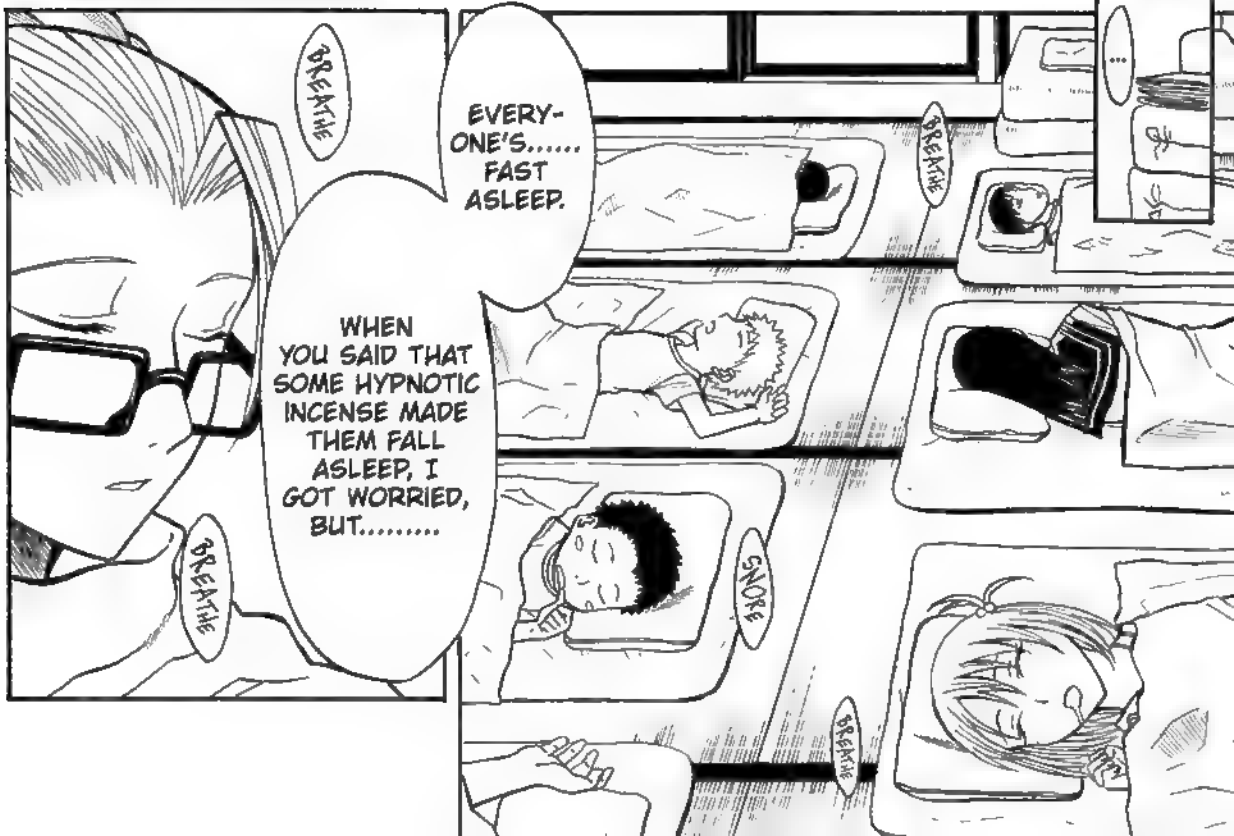
STOMP
YOU FIND A SAFE SPOT TO WORK YOUR MAGIC FROM.
FIRST, WE'LL SPLIT UP THE CORPSE PRINCESS AND HER MONK.
YES.
STEP
STEP
NOW.
TIME TO KILL.
HOW FITTING FOR A PRELUDE TO THE FESTIVAL.

CORPSE PRINCESS
3

DEATH 13: CONTRACT (PART 2)



SIGN: HAPPY BIRTHDAY HANAGAMI



WHAT'RE YOU— SOME OLD MAN?
UGH.
YOU SAYING THE KIDS LOOK LIKE LITTLE ANGELS?
THEY LOOK PEACE-FUL AS EVER.
I'M RE-LIEVED.
GUESS NOT .....
YOU REALLY THINK I'D LEAVE THEM LIKE THIS OTHERWISE?
SLUMBERCENSE (ITEM) GRADE 4 RITUAL TOOL
CLICK
CLICK
YEAH, DON'T WORRY. THE SLUMBER-CENSE'LL BE FILTERED OUT BY THEIR BODIES IN A FEW HOURS, AND THEY'LL WAKE UP.
I'LL SPARE YOU THE TECHNICAL DETAILS.
JUST KNOW THAT IT'LL KEEP EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM SAFE AND SOUND.
I'M ERECTING A STRING BARRIER OUTSIDE THIS DOOR.
STRETCH
NOW THEN.
CLOSE

PULL
YOU'LL BE ABLE TO OPEN IT FROM IN THERE WHEN THIS IS ALL OVER, BUT NO SHIKABANE CAN GET IN IN THE MEANTIME.
.....LIKE IT OR NOT, I'M LEAVING YOU IN THERE TO GUARD EVERYONE.
..... GOT IT.
...BIG BRO.
WHAT'S UP?
...I...
I MISJUDGED YOU, BIG BRO.
I THOUGHT YOU'D BEEN HIDING YOUR TRUE SELF FROM US THIS WHOLE TIME.
LIKE YOU'D BEEN FOOLING US.....
I WAS CONVINCED OF THAT UNTIL SENSEI TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR PAST.....
THIS CHARM... FORGOT TO GIVE IT TO HIM.
MISSED MY CHANCE...
THE TRUTH IS...
YOU'RE THE SAME BIG BRO YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN, BUT STILL.....
I COULDN'T SEE THAT.
SORRY.

HA HA.
WHAT'S GOING ON? YOU'RE ACTING SO DARN SWEET TODAY.
WHAA !?
I'M SPILLING MY GUTS ABOUT WORRYING AND COMING TO ACCEPT YOU, OVER HERE!!
.....
I'LL LIVE UP TO YOUR EXPECTATIONS.
... SPEAKING OF ...
TODAY'S YOUR BIRTHDAY, HUH.
.....YEAH.
カチャ CLICK
THANKS, OURI.
THE DATE JUST CHANGED OVER, SO I'LL GIVE YOU MY CONGRATS NOW.
AND WE'LL ALL CELEBRATE TOGETHER WHEN THIS IS OVER.
JUST LIKE ALWAYS.

.....
RIGHT.
THANKS, BIG BRO.
.....OH YEAH. ABOUT YOUR PRESENT .....
WHICH DO YOU WANT? A SCHOOL UNIFORM MAG, A GYM CLOTHES VIDEO, OR A NURSE OUTFIT DVD.....?
SMACK
OUCH !!
J-JUST JOKING, MAKINA .....
?
ALL RIGHT.
ALL DONE HERE.
THIS ROOM'S SAFE FOR NOW.
I DOUBT IT'LL HAPPEN, BUT IF THEY LIGHT A FIRE, YOU CAN STILL OPEN THE DOOR AND CARRY EVERYONE OUT.
GOT IT, OURI?
.....
GOT IT.
I'LL PROTECT THEM ALL.

SO...
JUST MAKE IT OUT OF THIS SAFE.
BIG BRO.
YEAH.
THIS YEAR...
...I'LL BE THE FIRST TO WISH YOU A PROPER HAPPY BIRTHDAY.
AT THIS RATE.

I GET THAT YOU'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO WHAT TOMORROW HOLDS.....

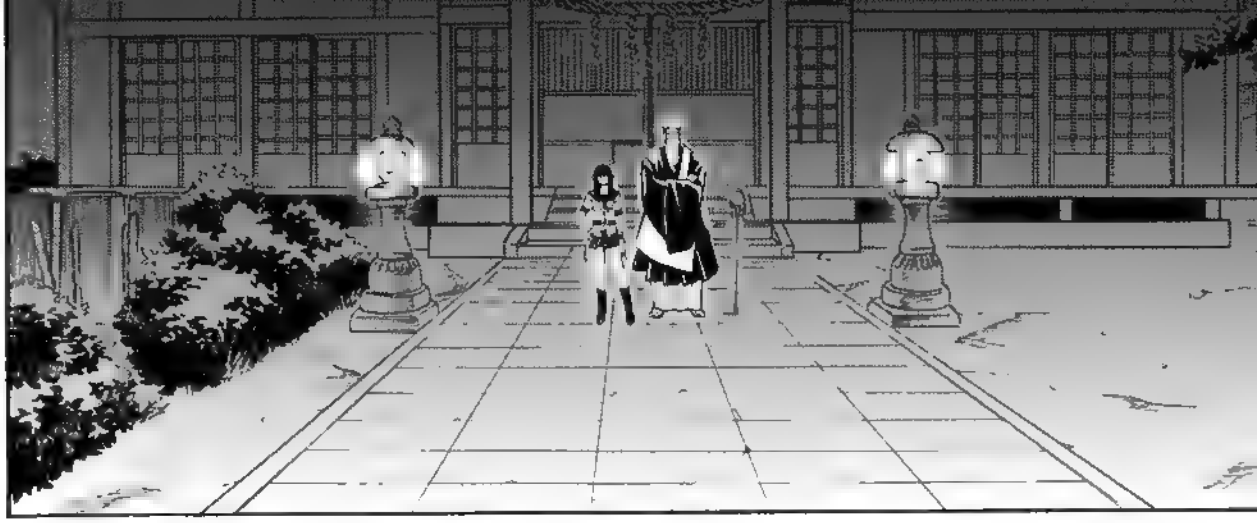
BUT ...

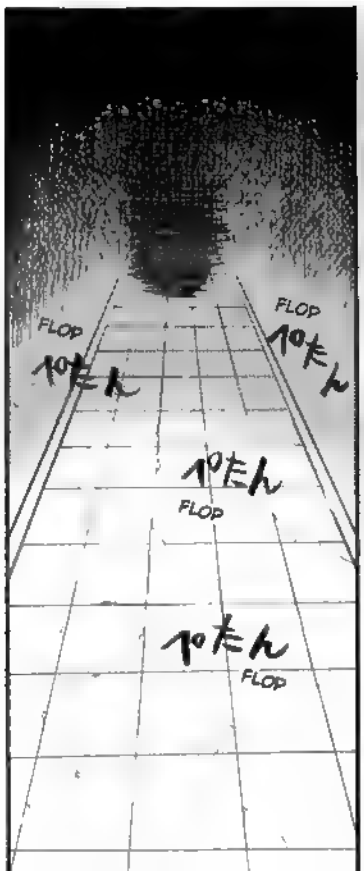
.....
KEISEI.
HMM ?

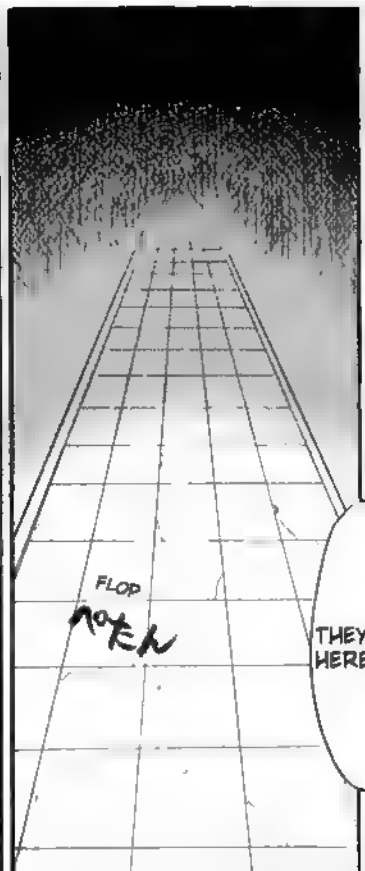
PLEASE.
DON'T DOWNPLAY THE DANGER WE'RE FACING TODAY.

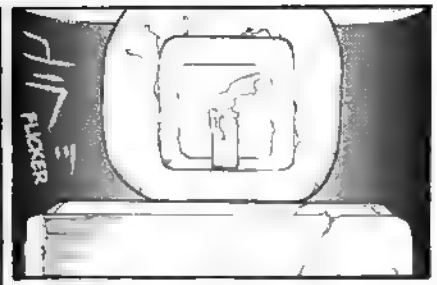
SORRY.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
RIGHT ...

WHAT'S MORE.....
...THEY'RE SURE TO WANT PAYBACK FOR THE SEVEN STARS AND THAT CASKET.
IF THEY'RE ATTACKING US HERE TOO, THAT CAN'T BE A COINCIDENCE.
FROM WHAT THE OLD MAN SAID, IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE PLANNING SOMETHING IN SHIKOKU.
WELL.
IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE GONNA START THE FIGHT. NOTHING'S CHANGED ABOUT WHAT WE HAVE TO DO.
WE'LL FINISH OFF THE ENEMY BEFORE THEY LAY A FINGER ON THE KIDS.
JUST LIKE ALWAYS... QUICKLY. EFFICIENTLY.
.....
BECAUSE THEY'RE AIMING FOR YOU AND ME.
IF WE PRESENT OURSELVES WILLINGLY ...
...I'M SURE THEY'LL PRIORITIZE US. ...THEN WE COUNTER-ATTACK.
MM-HM.
TICK
TICK



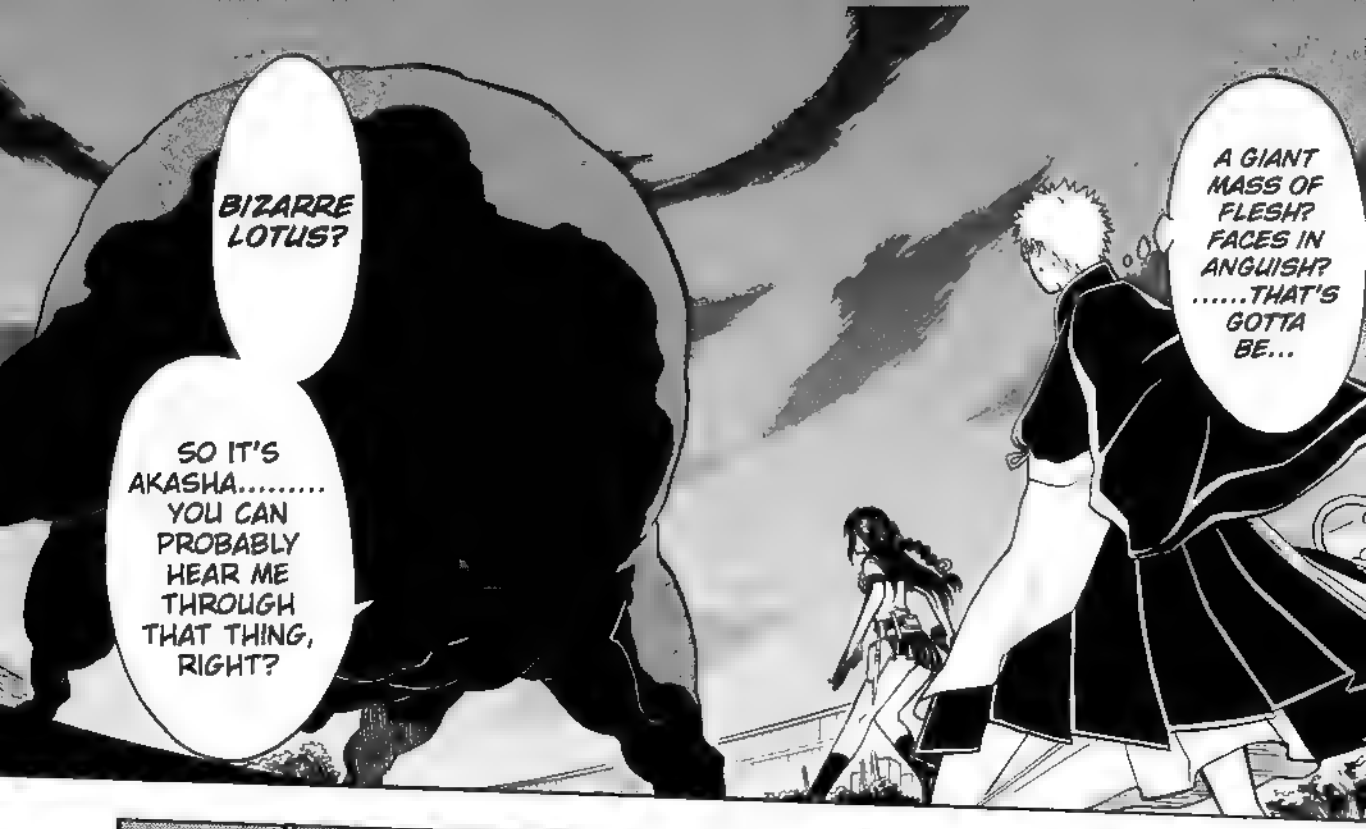

FLOP
ぺたん
FLOP
ぺたん
ぺたん
FLOP
ぺたん
FLOP

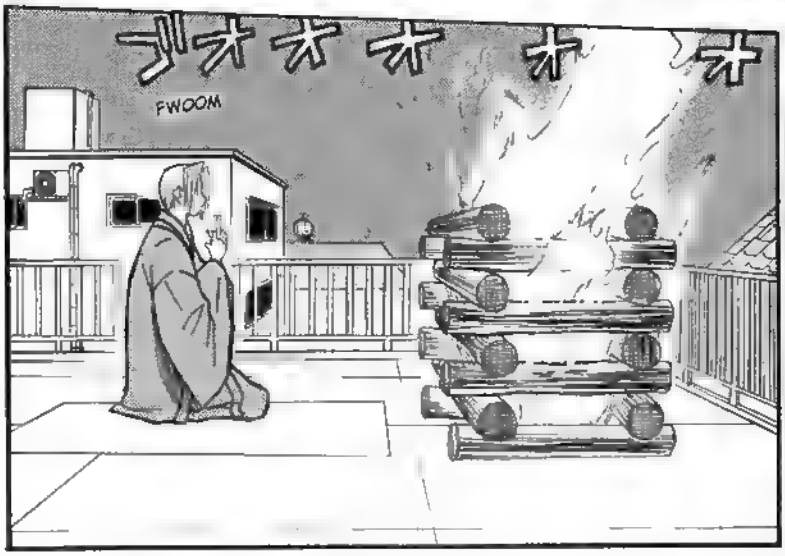

FLOP
ぺたん

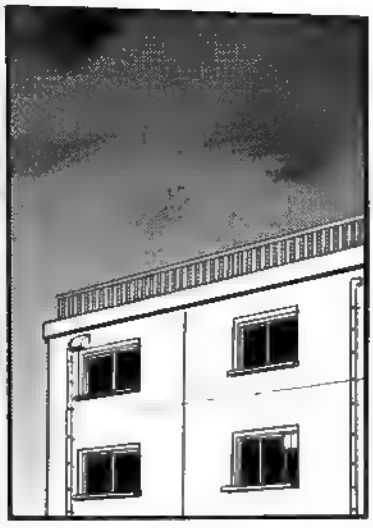

FLICKER

!
THEY'RE HERE...!
GRAB

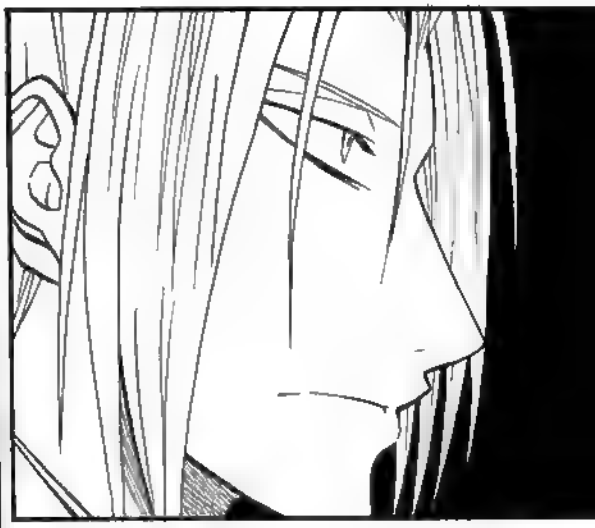
WRIGGLE
FLOP
LOOM
.....!!


A GIANT MASS OF FLESH? FACES IN ANGUISH? .....THAT'S GOTTA BE...
BIZARRE LOTUS?
SO IT'S AKASHA..... YOU CAN PROBABLY HEAR ME THROUGH THAT THING, RIGHT?

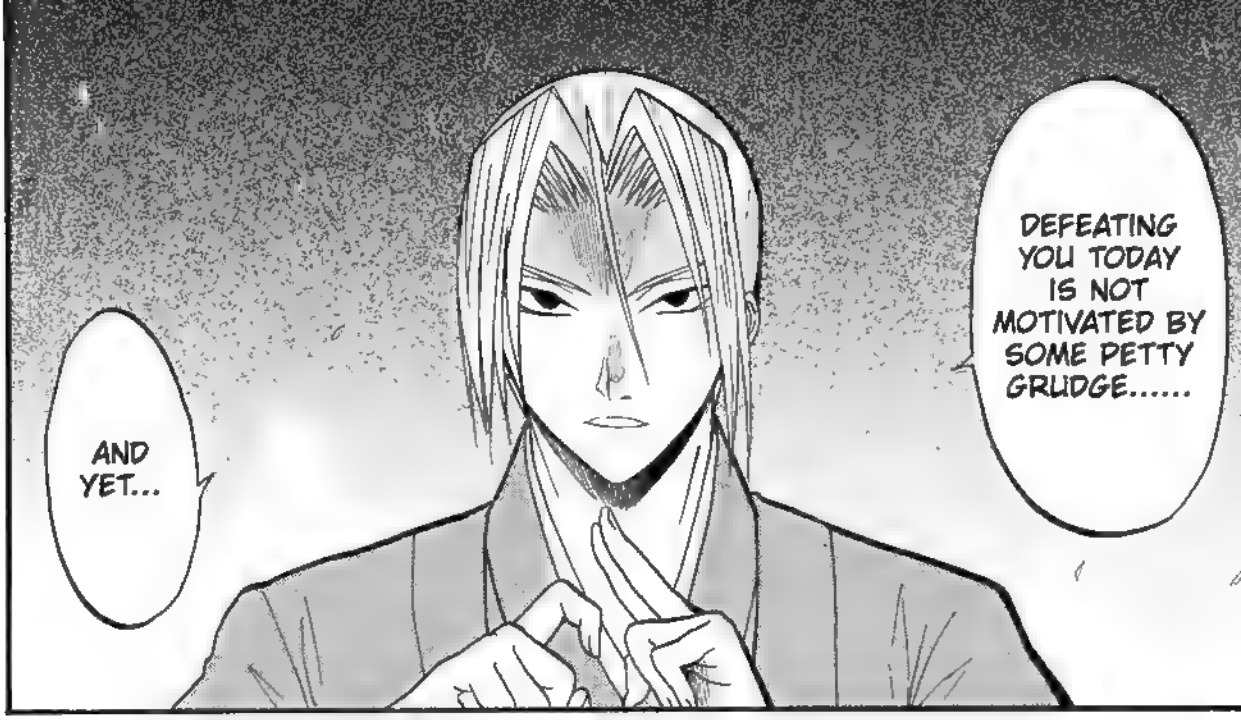

FWOOM

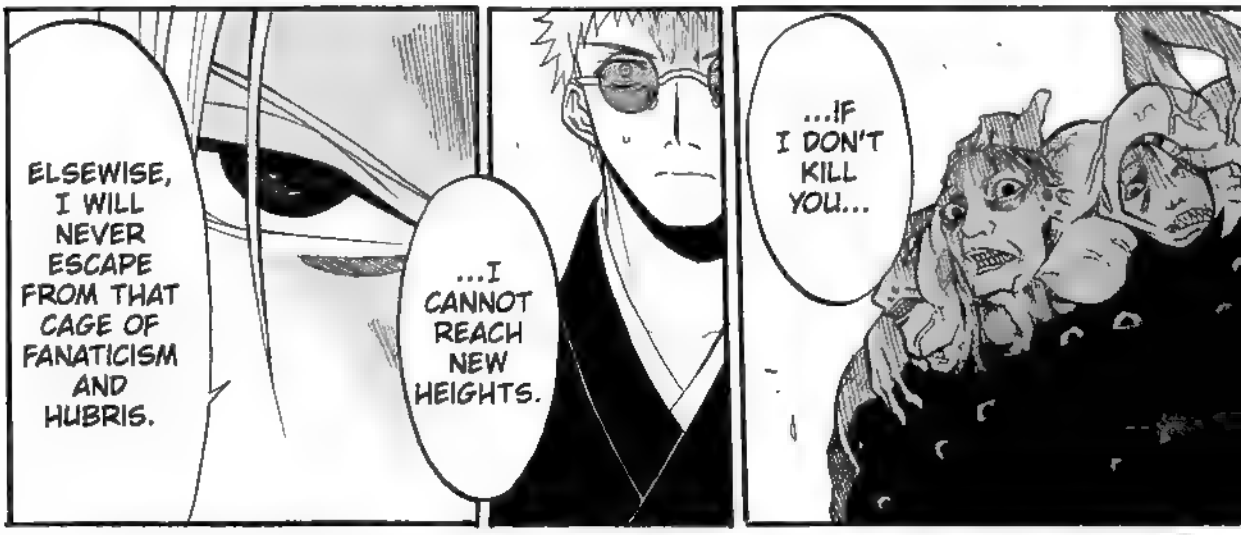


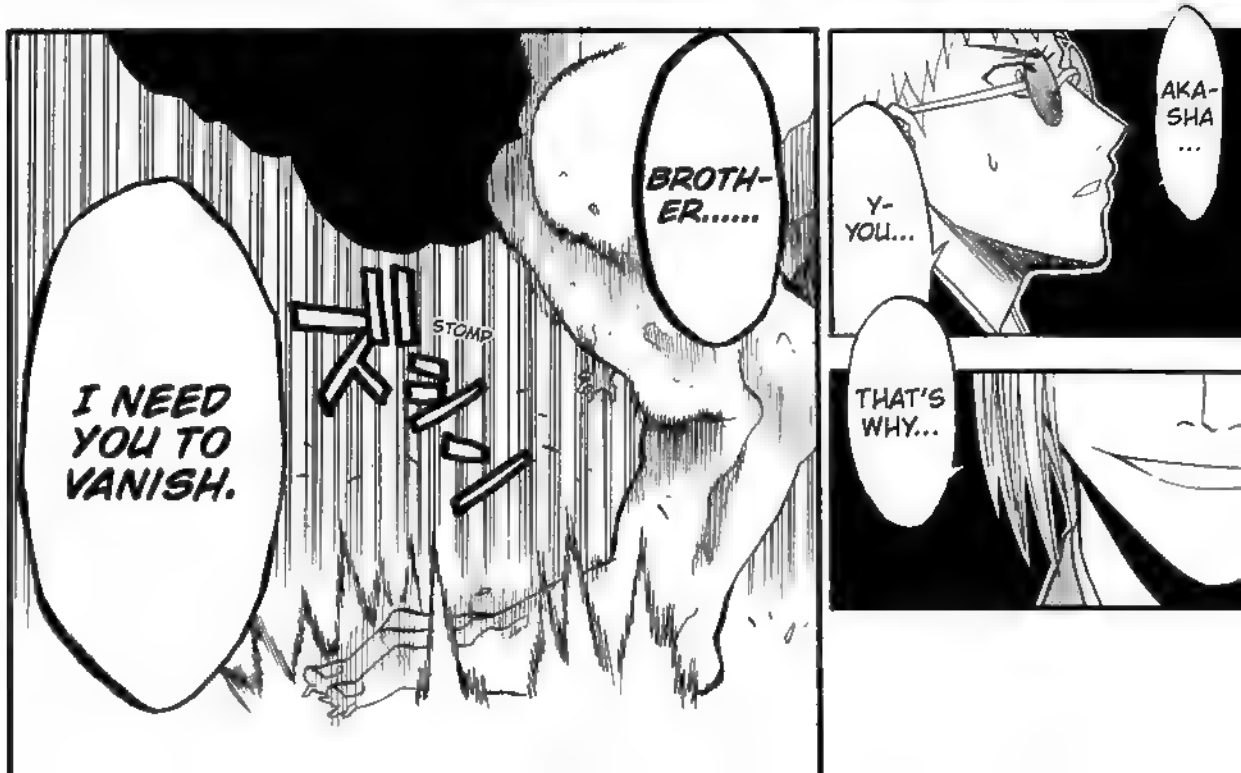
I'LL ASK YOU AGAIN.
WHY..... ARE YOU HELPING SHIKA-BANE?



CRACKLE
11°4
CRACKLE
11°4
AS I TOLD YOU, BROTHER .....
AIDING THEM IS THE SHORTEST PATH TO MY OWN GOAL.
HMPH .....
AT A TIME LIKE THIS .....
YES...
YOU MAY NOT BE AWARE OF THIS, BROTHER ...
TO ME, YOU REPRESENT A WALL THAT MUST BE OVERCOME... A TRIAL!!
FUR-THER-MORE ...
THE TRUTH WAS TOO MUCH FOR ME TO BEAR .....!
BACK THEN..!
YOUR EVERY MOVE...YOUR IDEALS.....
BUT YOUR ACTIONS LONG AGO HAD QUITE THE EFFECT ON ME.....
SIGN· HEAVENLY LIGHT
HOWEVER..... NO. RATHER, BECAUSE OF THAT...
I TRIED TO INCORPORATE IT ALL INTO MY OWN WAY OF BEING. I BELIEVED THAT YOURS WAS THE PROPER WAY TO BE A MAN OF THE FAITH.....
光天


DEFEATING YOU TODAY IS NOT MOTIVATED BY SOME PETTY GRUDGE.....
AND YET...


ELSEWISE, I WILL NEVER ESCAPE FROM THAT CAGE OF FANATICISM AND HUBRIS.
...I CANNOT REACH NEW HEIGHTS.
...IF I DON'T KILL YOU...


I NEED YOU TO VANISH.
STOMP
BROTH-ER.....
AKA-SHA ...
Y-YOU...
THAT'S WHY...

FWIP
YOU UP TO THE CHAL-LENGE?
!!
SKID
YES.
I KNOW YOUR WEAK-NESS..... YOUR VULNERA-BILITY.
WHY ON EARTH WOULD I GIVE YOU THE HOME TEAM ADVANTAGE? THERE, WHERE YOU CAN SO EASILY DO BATTLE?
THINK ABOUT IT FOR JUST A MOMENT .....
STRETCH
STRETCH
STRETCH
STRETCH
STRETCH
RETCH
!?
BULGE

DASH
!?
YES, I CAN SPLIT OFF BITS OF FLESH.
WELL...? WHAT WILL YOU DO, BROTHER?
PROTECT YOUR FAMILY?
DRIP
DRIP
WHAT THE —?
STEP
!!
LEAP
!?
WAIT, KEI—

YOUR OPPONENT...
...IS RIGHT HERE.
LOOM
GRAB
GLARE
DAMN YOU ...!!
KACHAK

WHOOSH
SLAM
STEP
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BOOM

STEP
SQUIRM
SQUIRM
SLICE
SLICE
SKID
SKID
SKID
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
PRESS
BLAM

WHOOSH
ZOOM
TMP
SPIN
WHOOSH
SLICE
HAA !!
WHAM

WRIGGLE
WRIGGLE
THUD
WRIGGLE
WRIGGLE
WRIGGLE
WRIGGLE
RISE
BUT I'VE GOT TO HURRY.....
KEISEI...!!
INSTANT REGENERATION!!
IT'S NOT GONNA LET ME GET AWAY FROM HERE.....

LOOM
TUG
OW...
OWW
COUGH
PLUCK
SLAM

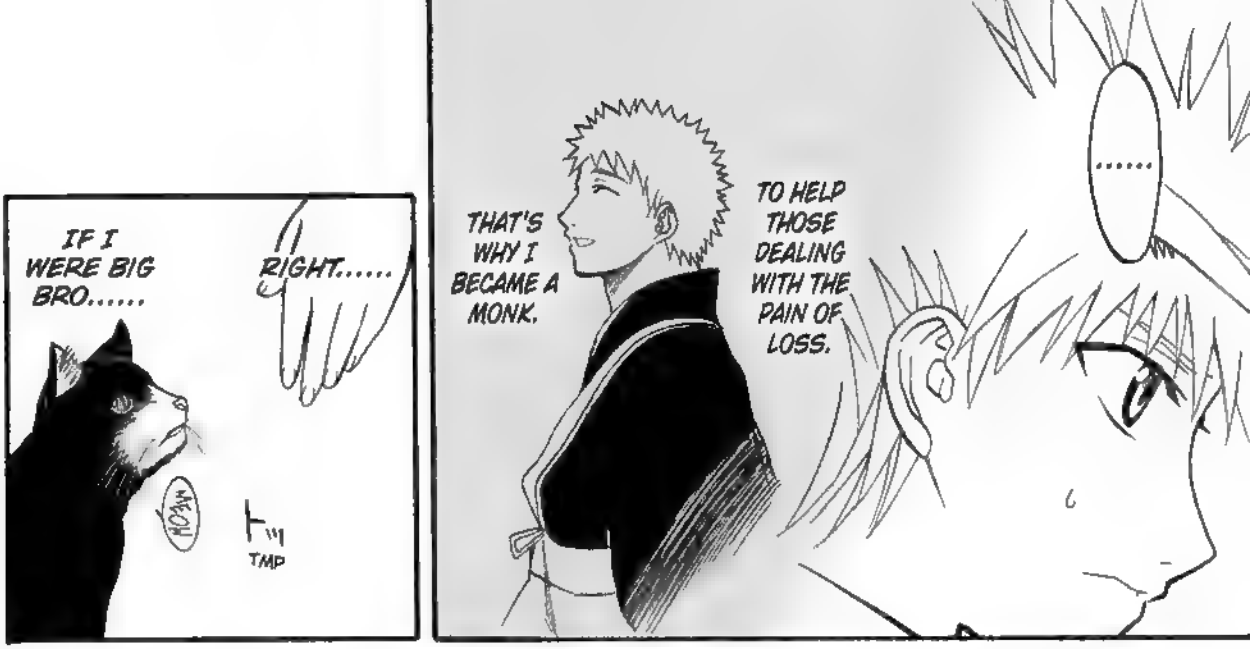
CRACK
CRACK
WRAP
SNAP
CRACK
GRIT
AHH.
GAH
.....
AHH
.....
BURST
.....RIGHT.... I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN.....
THUD
SLICE
GAHHH!!

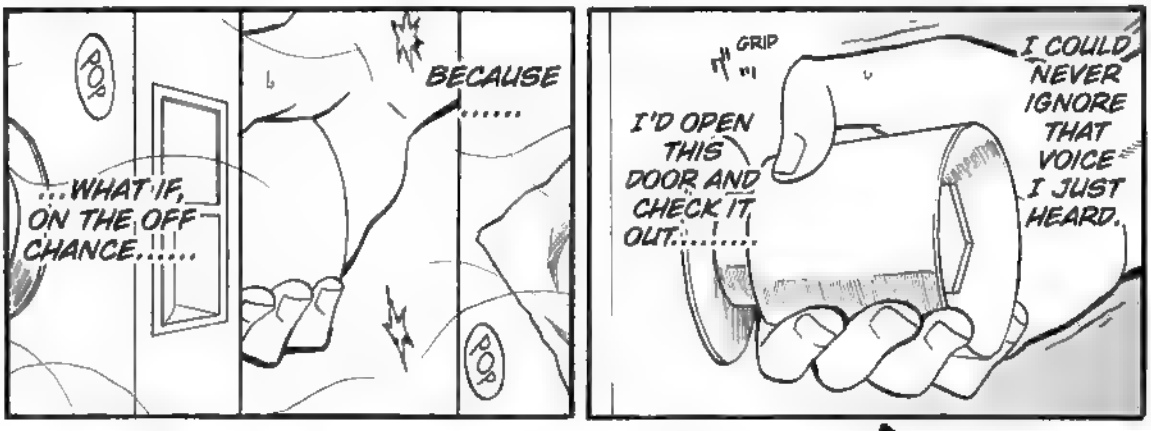
SNAP
SNAP
I NEED TO TAKE IT DOWN QUICKLY, YES, BUT I ALSO NEED TO FIGHT MINDFULLY .....
CRACK
THIS IS A FIGHT AGAINST A SHIKA-BANE.
CRACK
THINKING ABOUT THOSE SORTS OF THINGS WILL GET ME KILLED.....
SQUIRM
HAA
SQUIRM
HAA
THINKING ABOUT OTHER ENEMIES...OR PURPOSEFULLY TRYING TO AVOID HEAVY DAMAGE.....
CRACK
WHOOSH
ALL I NEED...
SLICE
FWOOSH

WHOOSH
SLICE
BANG
BANG
SLICE
WHOOSH
BANG
BANG
AHH-HHH-HH!!
...I'M FIGHTING FOR!
...IS WHAT EXACTLY IT IS...
DRIP
...TO THINK ABOUT...
DRIP DRIP
THAT'S ALL!!
SLICE

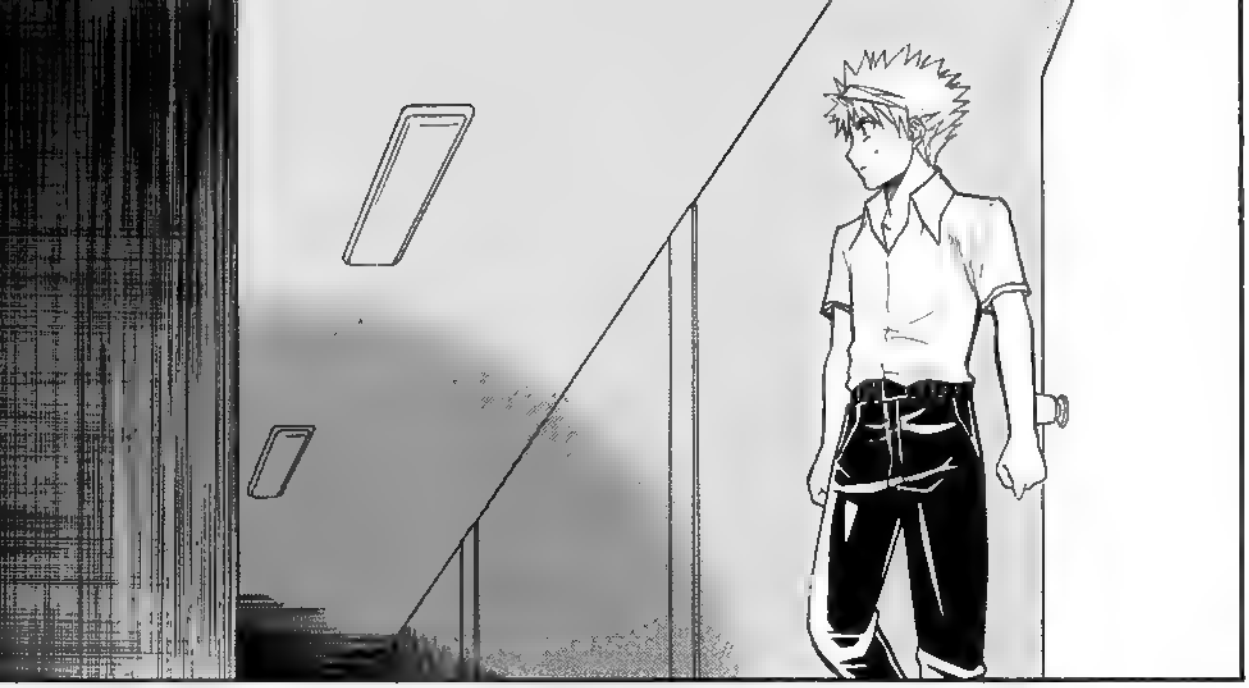
SLAM
SLAM
SLAM
!?
...
HELP
...
...ME.
.....
HELP
...
IT WAS ALMOST TOO QUIET TO HEAR... BUT.....
THAT VOICE..... WAS THAT...BIG BRO.....?
SLAM
!?

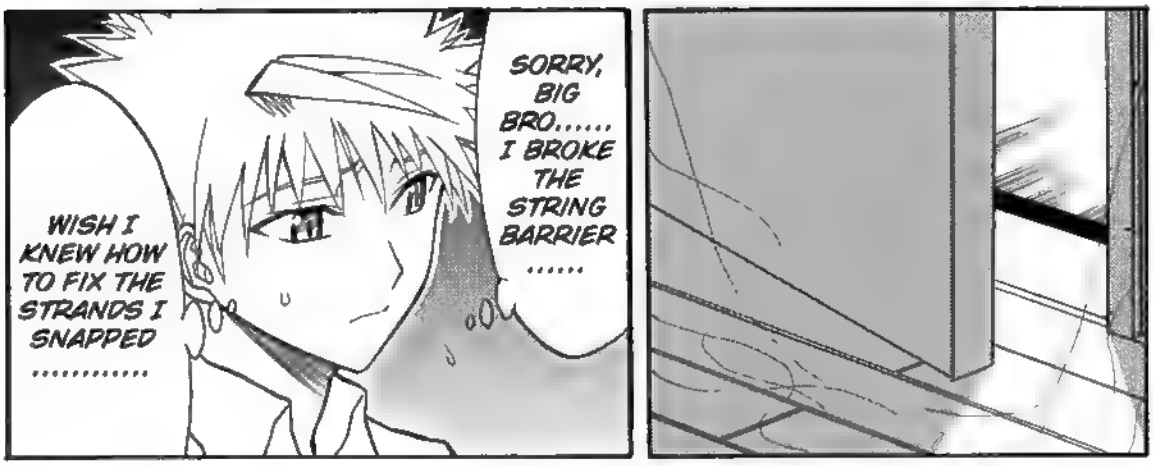
MEOW...
WHAT DO I DO?
HI
JOLT
THE ONE I SAW IN THE KITCHEN BEFORE.....?
...
A CAT .....?
WHY'RE YOU HERE .....?
.....
RUB
MEOW...
MAKES ME THINK OF WHAT SENSEI SAID YESTERDAY. ABOUT BIG BRO'S REASON FOR FIGHTING.
YOU'RE ONE UNLUCKY LITTLE GUY.
OH MAN..... YOU PICKED QUITE THE TIME TO SNEAK IN HERE.
..... JUST... A CAT.

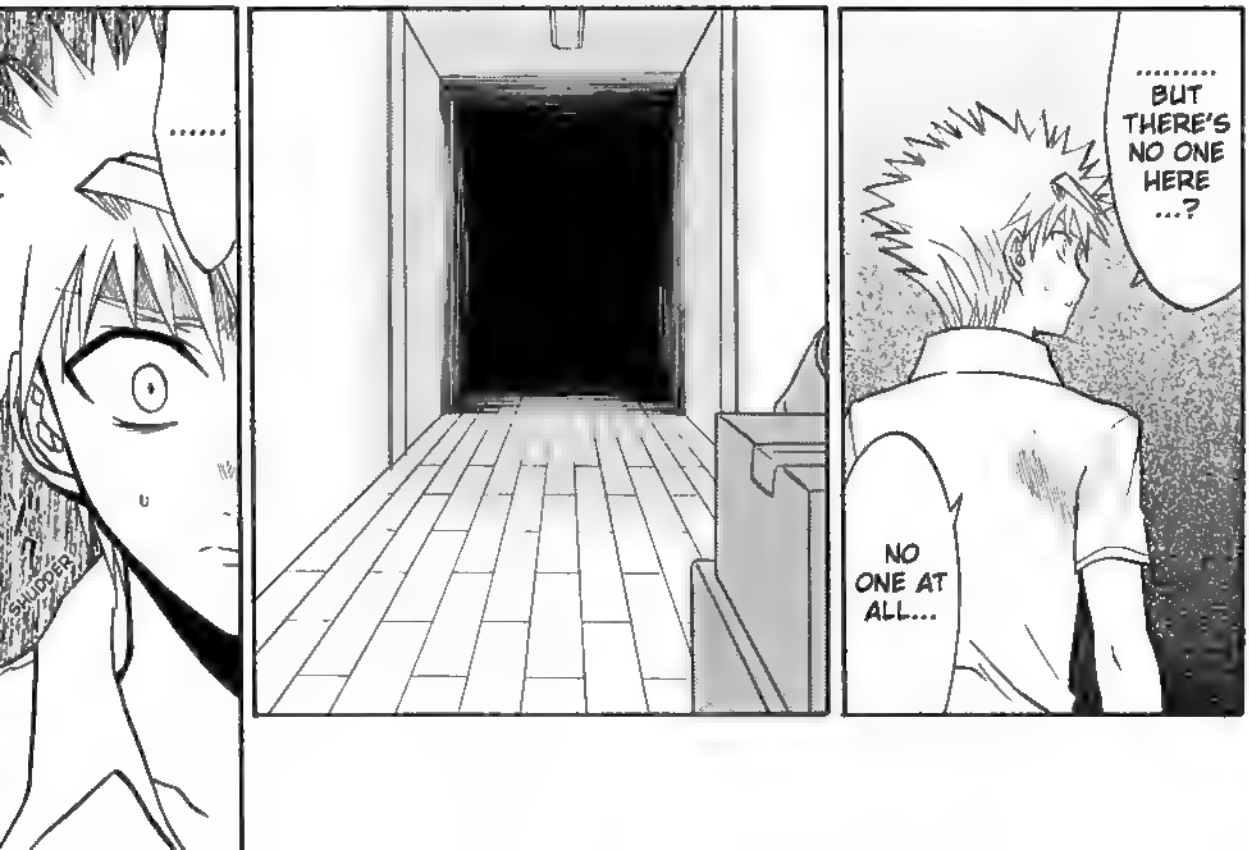

IF I WERE BIG BRO.....
RIGHT.....
MEOW
TMP
THAT'S WHY I BECAME A MONK.
TO HELP THOSE DEALING WITH THE PAIN OF LOSS.
.....


POP
...WHAT IF, ON THE OFF CHANCE.....
BECAUSE .....
POP
GRIP
I'D OPEN THIS DOOR AND CHECK IT OUT.....
I COULD NEVER IGNORE THAT VOICE I JUST HEARD.

SPLIT
SPLIT
LOOM
LOOM
LOOM
LOOM
LOOM
LOOM
LOOM
LOOM
MEOWWW.
.....




SORRY, BIG BRO..... I BROKE THE STRING BARRIER .....
WISH I KNEW HOW TO FIX THE STRANDS I SNAPPED .....


.....
SHUDDER
.....
BUT THERE'S NO ONE HERE ...?
NO ONE AT ALL...

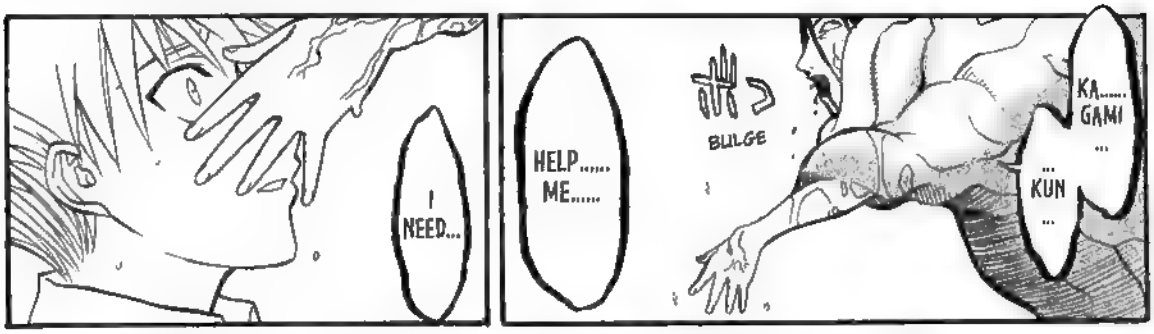
.....
GYAHHH
OGYAHH.
OGYAHH...
J—
JUST MY IMAGI-NATION.
O-OKAY. I'LL HEAD BACK AND WAIT.....
...
JUST NOW!!
!?
TURN
CREAK
WE DON'T HAVE ANY BABIES HERE...
.....A CRYING BABY .....?
NO WAY .....

THE POWER'S OUT.....!
.....
CLICK
.....
NOBODY?
OGYAHH.
OGYAHH.
OGYAHH.
TWITCH
SOMETHING IN THE DARK.....
OVER THERE
.....
OGYAHHH.
OGYAHHH.
OGYAHHH.
CREEP

OGYAHHH
OGYAHHH.
OGYA!
...
SHUDDER
OGYAHHH.
IT'S.....
LOOM
WHAT IS THIS.....?
WHA—

BUMP
!
I CAN'T RUN.....
WHAT DO I DO...? WHAT DO...
OGYAH...
DRIP
—LP ME...
GYAHH
.....HELP...
KAH!
POP
CRACK
CRACK
BURST

LAST MONTH..... YOU JUMPED INTO TRAFFIC...
S-SO HOW...?
...MIZU-SHIMA .....
...SAN?
HELP.
HELP.... ME...
HELP .....
...ME .....


I NEED...
HELP..... ME.....
BULGE
KA..... GAMI ...
... KUN ...

FLECK
FLECK
FLECK
!?
HELP.....
GRAHH!!
SPLIT

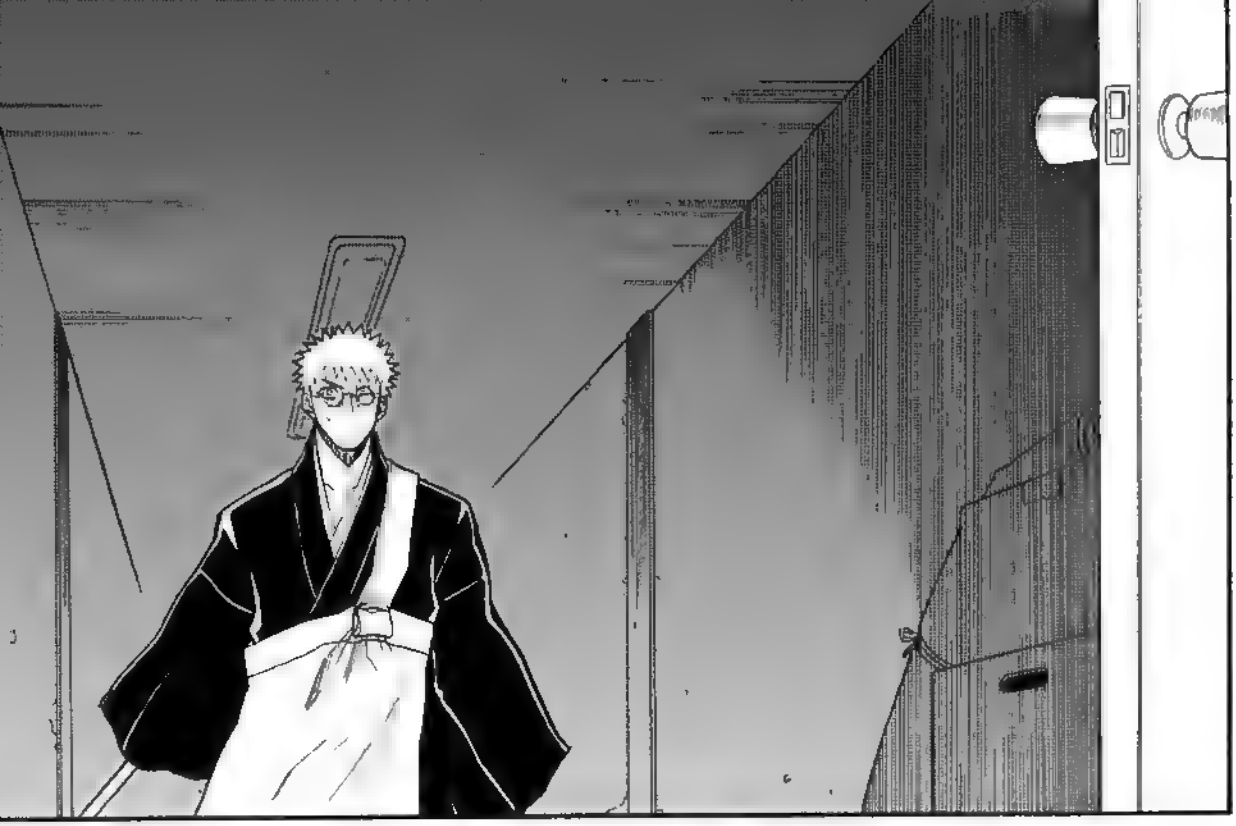
THINKING HE CAN GET THROUGH TO A BIG BALL OF SHIKABANE.
RRRIP
HEH..... THIS DUMB KID.....

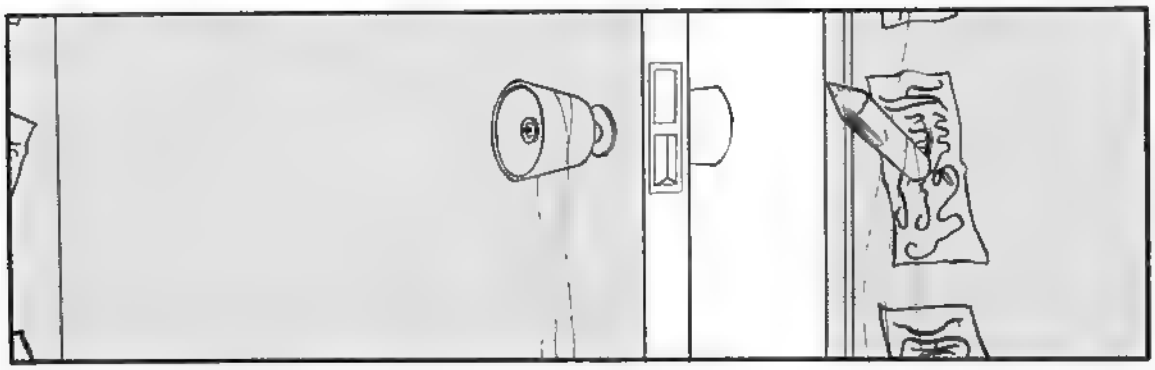
THAT WONDERFUL SMELL—THE "OMINOUS DEATH OMEN."
CLAMBER
EITHER WAY..... YOU'VE GOT A "STAR" IN YOU, KID. YOU'RE NOT LIKE OTHER HUMANS.
PRETTY FUNNY.
YOU SPOT A FRIEND OF YOURS IN THERE?
.....I CAN SMELL IT ON YA.
SHOULD I DO HIM IN, AKASHA?
.... BUT ... AS OF NOW, YOU'RE JUST IN THE WAY.....
SQUELCH
YES...THAT BOY...THERE'S DEFINITELY SOMETHING TO HIM.....
PERHAPS..... WELL, THE ODDS ARE SLIM, BUT RATHER THAN KILL HIM.....
SUCH A SMALL MISCALCU-LATION WILL NOT RESULT IN FAILURE.
RATHER, TRY TO THINK OF A WAY TO USE HIM.
FWOOM
.....NO. NO NEED FOR THAT.

WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO?
.....
HUNH?
LIVE BAIT FOR THE CONTRACTING MONK THEN?
SO HALF-ASSED.
AND SO BORING. I'VE GOT A BETTER IDEA.
CLIK
...I THOUGHT UP A FUN IDEA.
WELLLL...
AFTER LISTENING TO YOUR LITTLE CHAT WITH THE MONK BEFORE ...
MY LEGS..... AREN'T RESPONDING.
.....I— I CAN'T MOVE.....
!!
NO LIDS. THOSE AREN'T HUMAN EYES...
KU..... KU-KU-KU-KU-KU.....
SQUISH
SQUISH
!!
STAB

NOW.
LET'S HAVE SOME FUN, KID...
STRETCH
YANK
!!
UHH..... OH... AH.....
FFF .....
GUH... PUH.
SCRATCH
AHH ...
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
AHH ...
...UGH.
KAHH .....
SQUIRM
SQUIRM
SQUIRM

SLASH
TCH .....
SHIT..... THAT TOOK MORE TIME THAN I EXPECTED .....
HAA.
HAA.
THE SOUMA I TOOK SHOULD BE EFFECTIVE FOR...ABOUT THIRTY MORE MINUTES.
HAA.
HAA.
SO BEFORE IT RUNS OUT.....
...FIRST, I'LL CHECK ON EVERYONE.....
STEP





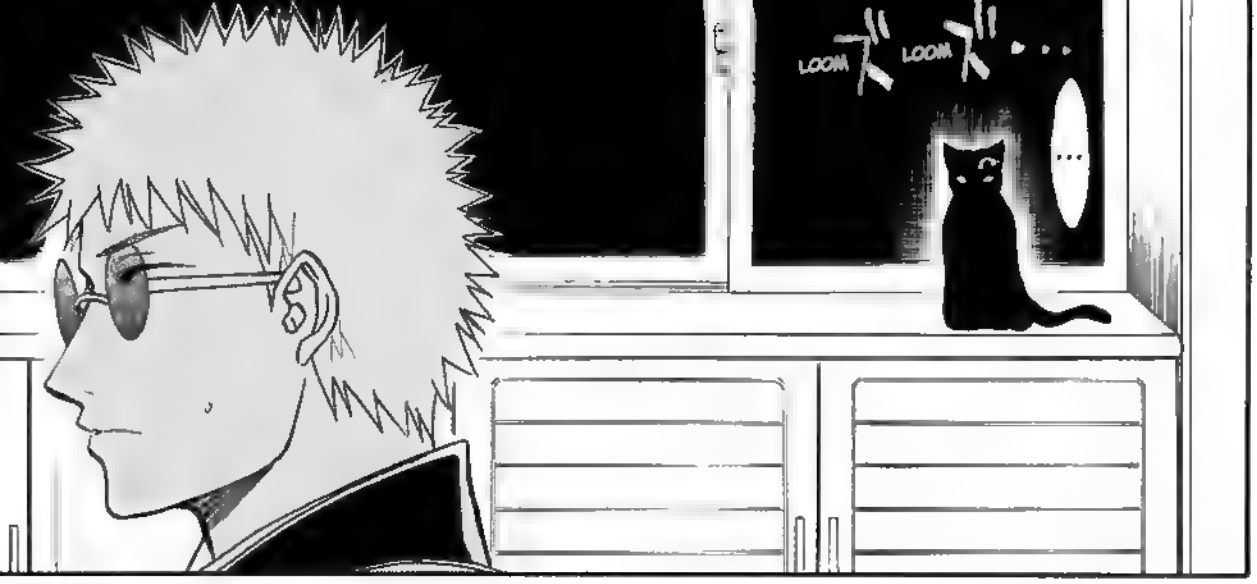
BADUM

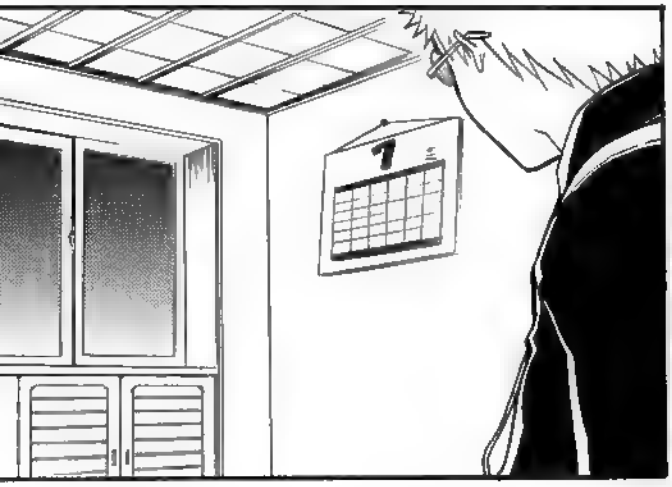
BADUM

BADUM

IT'S OPEN!!
BADUM

ROLL
ゴロ
NNAH.
NNN...
NNN...
...
HIS SOUL
MAN... DON'T SCARE ME LIKE THAT.
SIGH
I WAS SERIOUSLY ABOUT TO FREAK OUT.
DAMN THAT OURI.
PROBABLY SNUCK OUT TO PEE...
WAIT.
!
OURI WOULDN'T LEAVE FOR A DUMB REASON LIKE THAT.....


LOOM
LOOM
...
...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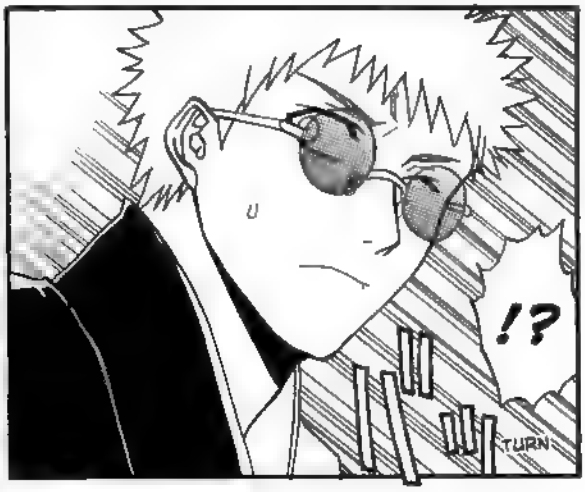
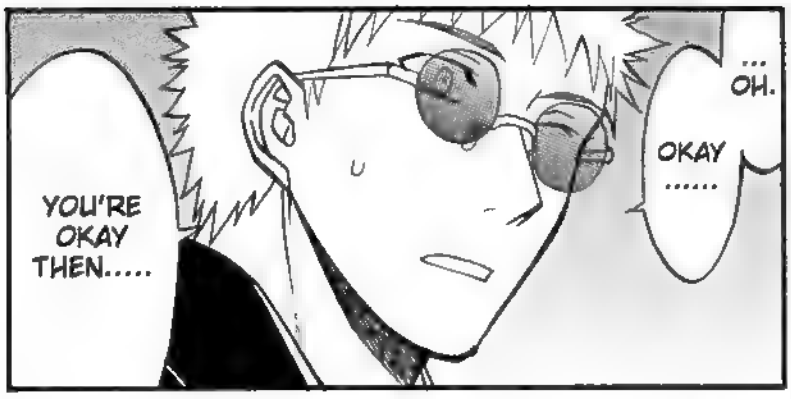

!?
TURN

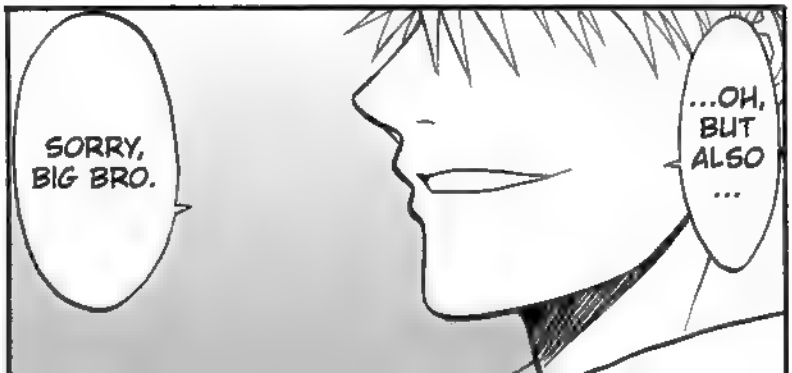
!

SOMETHING MUCH MORE SINISTER .....
WHAT... WAS THAT.....? A CAT...? NO..... SOMETHING GAVE ME CHILLS.

DID YOU..... HURT YOUR HAND?
OURI !?
WHAT'S WRONG ?


YOU'RE OKAY THEN.....
... OH. OKAY .....

..... AHH.
DRIP
THIS IS..... NOTHING.
THE HALL WAS DARK, AND I CAUGHT IT ON SOMETHING. .....JUST A SCRATCH.


SORRY, BIG BRO.
...OH, BUT ALSO ...

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
AS LONG AS YOU'RE SAFE.
I CAN FIX UP THE BARRIER IN A FLASH.
..... OH.
HUH? AH.....
YOU MEAN FOR BREAKING THE STRING BARRIER?
HEY..... OURI.
.....
AHH..... SHE'S FINE.
MAKINA AND I ARE CONNECTED BY A SPECIAL BOND. IF SOMETHING HAPPENED, I'D KNOW IN A—
!
WHAT ABOUT THE CORPSE PRINCESS BACK THERE?
WHY *DID* YOU LEAVE THE ROOM?
..... COME TO THINK OF IT...
HMM?
Y'SEE...
RIGHT.

I WAS LURED OUT.

SLICE

SLICE

BY "DEATH."

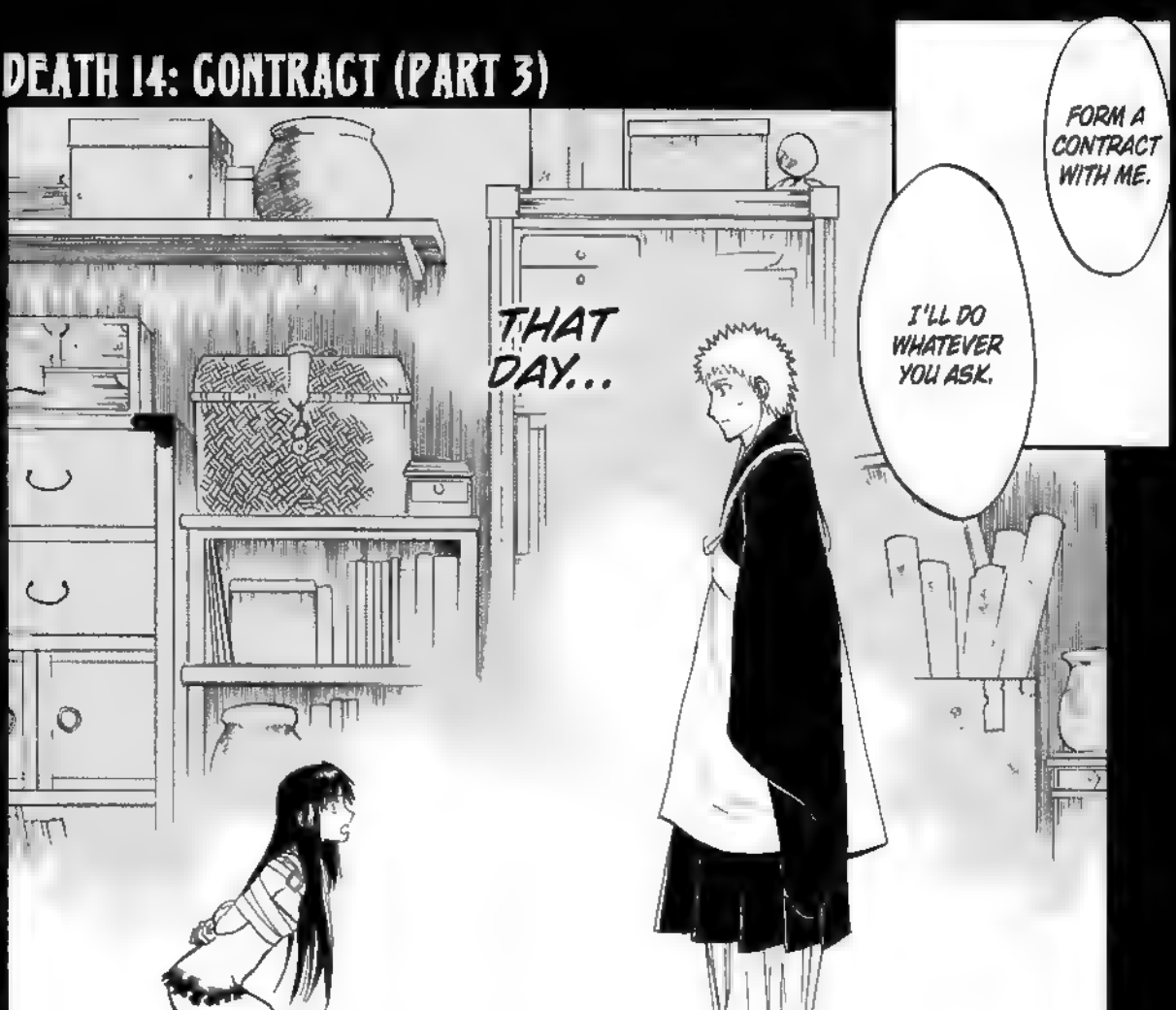
STAB

STAB

I WAS LURED OUT.
SLICE
SLICE
BY "DEATH."

WHAT THE—
PULL
...
WHAT ON EARTH.....?
THUD
DON'T TELL ME.....
GOOD-NIGHT.
BIG BRO.
OURI.....
SPLATTER
SPLATTER

DEATH 14: CONTRACT (PART 3)



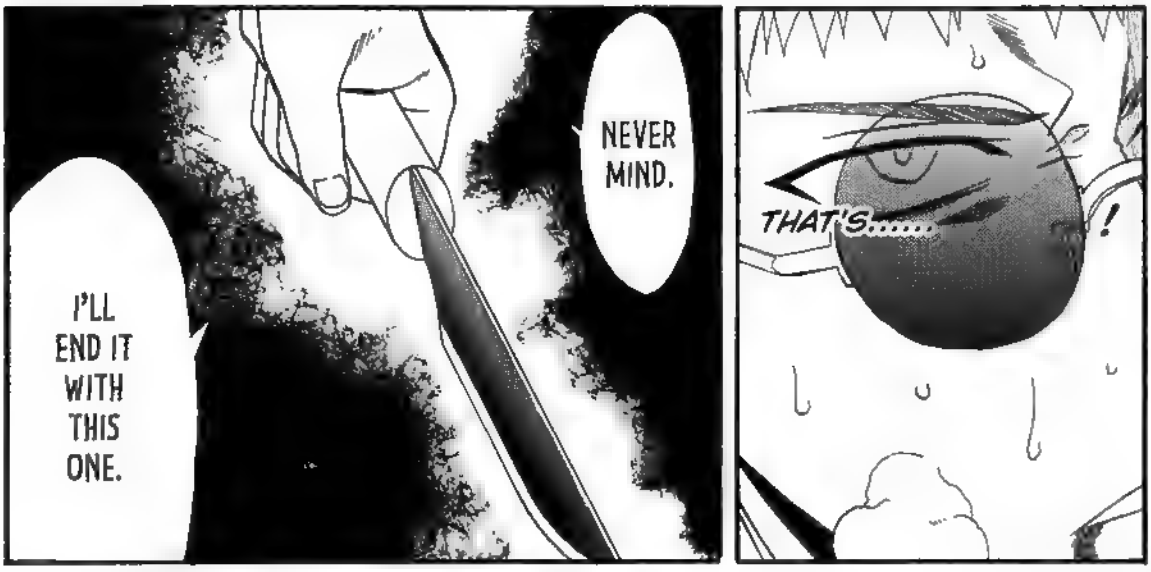
WE BECAME...

...COMRADES IN ARMS.

DEATH 14: CONTRACT (PART 3)

STAB
I WAS LURED OUT.
YANK
GAHHA.
BY "DEATH."
THUD
TCH.
HAA.
OURI
HAA.
HAA

ROLL
SORRY, BIG BRO..... I MEANT TO FINISH YOU OFF WITH ONE THRUST, BUT...
...I'M JUST NOT USED TO THIS BODY.


NEVER MIND.
I'LL END IT WITH THIS ONE.
THAT'S.....!

IN THAT CASE.....
DANGLE
RAISE
POSSESSION.....
THE INTERNAL PARASITE TYPE.....
STAND

I'LL FORCE IT OUT...
...DIRECTLY!!
TACKLE
SLAM
I'VE GOT TO KEEP OURI FROM BECOMING A MURDERER!!
THIRD IMMOBILITY SEAL.
RAISE
THE BLADE ONLY CUT THROUGH THE MUSCLE AND STERNUM..... IT DIDN'T PENETRATE.....
NOT YET.....
GA-HAA ...
BAM
MOST IMPORTANTLY...
LICK

KAHH.
POP
POW
BE-GONE !!
PAT
.....LET'S SEE.
NOW JUST... GOTTA DO THIS.
SQUASH
STAB
SLAP

CAN I GET THROUGH THIS NIGHT WITH THE FEW TOOLS I'VE GOT LEFT...!?
BUT I HAD TO USE MY TIGER CUB SANKO-SHO.
SLUMP
THE SEAL'S..... COMPLETE .....
BZZT
BZZT
BZZT

OH.
!!
LURCH
BIG BRO !!

NN...
! YOU'RE UP, OURI.
B— BIG... BRO?

THAT WOUND .....
YOU'RE HURT .....
TEAR
..... B— BIG... BRO.

HEY .....
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE BACK TO NORMAL.

YOU DUMMY.
LIKE I'D DIE AFTER GETTING STABBED BY A KID WHO HASN'T FOUGHT A DAY IN HIS LIFE.
DRIP
BEFORE, THAT WAS.....
...S-SO THAT MEANS ...
BIG BRO..... I.....
...S-STABBED YOU...
THAT WAS..... ALL REAL .....
SO STUPID..... I'M..... SUCH AN IDIOT.....
BIG BRO .....
I'M SORRY .....
SORRY.
DRIP
DRIP
AS LONG AS THE SOUMA'S STILL IN EFFECT ...
JUST GOTTA STOP THE BLEEDING.
SQUEEZE
DON'T WORRY.
!!
CREAK
HA.
WELL THAT WAS DUMB OF ME, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF.

IF I'D JUST KILLED HIM WITHOUT SCREWING AROUND, I'D STILL HAVE TWO EYES.
ACTING ON IMPULSE IS JUST ONE OF OUR BAD HABITS.
COULDA SAVED MYSELF A LOT OF STRESS BY JUST DOING IT RIGHT.
DOESN'T REALLY MATTER THOUGH.
DON'T BE SCARED.
THE OTHERS HERE'LL JOIN YOU IN THE AFTERLIFE SOON ENOUGH.
ANY-WAY.
...
HOW 'BOUT I TAKE ONE OF YOUR EYES IN EXCHANGE ?
WHOOSH!
.....TCH.
SHIT..... BEFORE I CAN STOCK UP ON MORE TOOLS.....
STEP
TURN
OURI!! GET BACK...

WHAM
FWOOSH
TURN
WH— WHAT THE!?
HOW COULD ...
THUD
OURI .....
GETTING DIS-TRACTED AGAIN, HUH.

WHAM
KOFF
CRACK
SMASH
AS EX-PECT-ED.
BROTH-ER... YOU'RE TOO NAIVE...
SMASH
SMASH
SMASH
SMASH
SMASH
SMASH
SMASH
SMASH

COLLAPSE
THUMP

STOMP
WHAT.....?
.....HUH?

YOU CAN FEEL IT, YES?
HE'S JUST PASSED AWAY.
YOUR BOND WITH YOUR CONTRACTING MONK HAS BEEN SEVERED.
!
WHAT?
MY ENERGY.....
TREMBLE
TREMBLE

YOU'RE LYING .....
THUD
N—
NO... WAY.
THE BOND BETWEEN CONTRACTING MONK AND CORPSE PRINCESS IS ONE OF MASTER AND SERVANT.
IT CAN BE BROKEN IN TWO WAYS.
EITHER THE CONTRACTING MONK HIMSELF USES A SPELL.
OR... ONE OF THE TWO PARTIES ...
...DIES OR SUFFERS A FATAL WOUND.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?
WITH YOUR OWN TWO EYES?

BROTHER
.....
.....

LIKE CANDY FROM A BABY.
SQUISH
AND WITH THIS, MY WORK HERE'S DONE.
GOTCHA.
THE MONK'S LEFT EYE IS MINE.
THIS EYE WAS BATHED IN ALL THAT "FINAL BLOOD," SO.....
NOW THAT WE GOT IT, THAT'S ALL YOU NEED TO MAKE THAT CASKET OF YOURS, AKASHA.
.....
YES.
.....
BIG .....
... BRO .....
BADUM
YEAH..... I'LL TAKE OVER THIS MONK'S BODY.....
...AND STRANGLE EVERY LAST ONE OF THOSE KIDS. HOW ABOUT THAT?
HA.
NOW I'M FREE TO HAVE SOME FUN.
KICK
WITCH

GIHA!! GIHA-HA-HA-HA!!
"STOP IT." "HELP ME." THAT SORT.
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO SOME NICE SCREAMS FROM THOSE KIDDIES.
HE MANAGED TO SEAL UP THE DOOR, BUT YOU CAN BREAK IT, RIGHT, AKASHA?
TWINGE
HUNH?
HAVE YOU ALREADY FORGOTTEN WHY YOU LOST YOUR OWN RIGHT EYE?
.....
SHI-MEN-SAN.
SHATTER
TUMBLE
GAH!
SMASH

I DON'T GET YOU, MAN.
IF ALL YOU CARED ABOUT WAS GETTING THIS DONE QUICK, WHY NOT JUST KILL HER WITH THAT?
EH?
ALL THAT REMAINS... IS TO FINISH OFF THIS CORPSE PRINCESS .....
MELD
WE'VE DONE ALL WE MEANT TO.
SFX: WRIGGLE WRIGGLE
THEN..... WE'RE DONE HERE.
NO ..... PLEASE .....
KEISEI .....!!
CRAWL
KEI-SEI .....!
.....IT CAN'T BE...
.....!!

WELL.
I GUESS IF THAT'S HOW IT IS.
CRUNCH
KICK

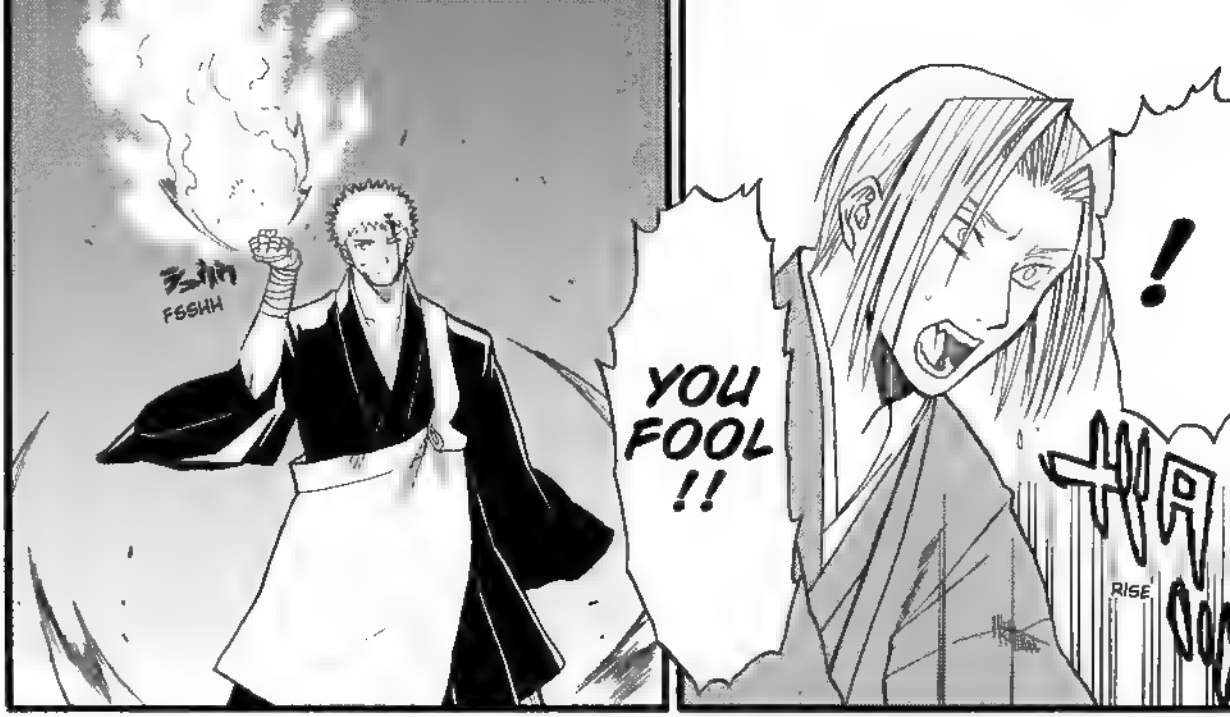
THEN LEMME RIP HIS HEAD OFF HIS SHOULDERS. YOU CAN WATCH.
GRIND
HEY, GIRLIE.
YOU STILL CAN'T BELIEVE YOUR PRECIOUS MONK IS DEAD?

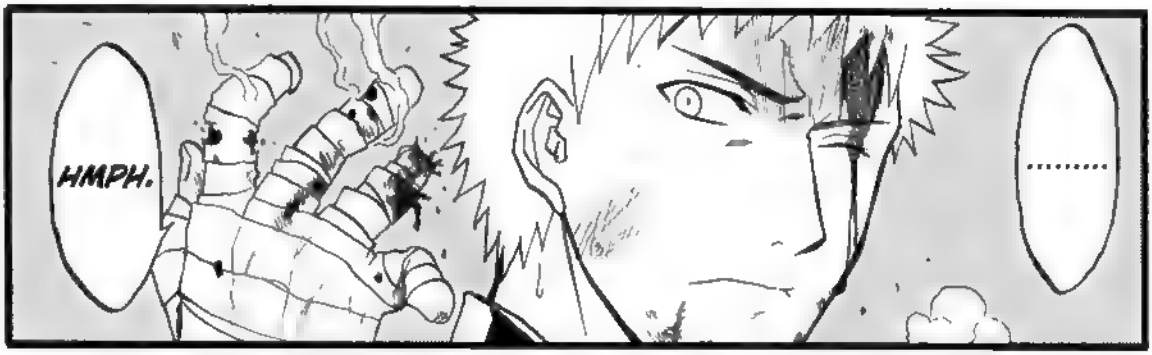
STOP ...!!
... NO ...
STOP IT.....

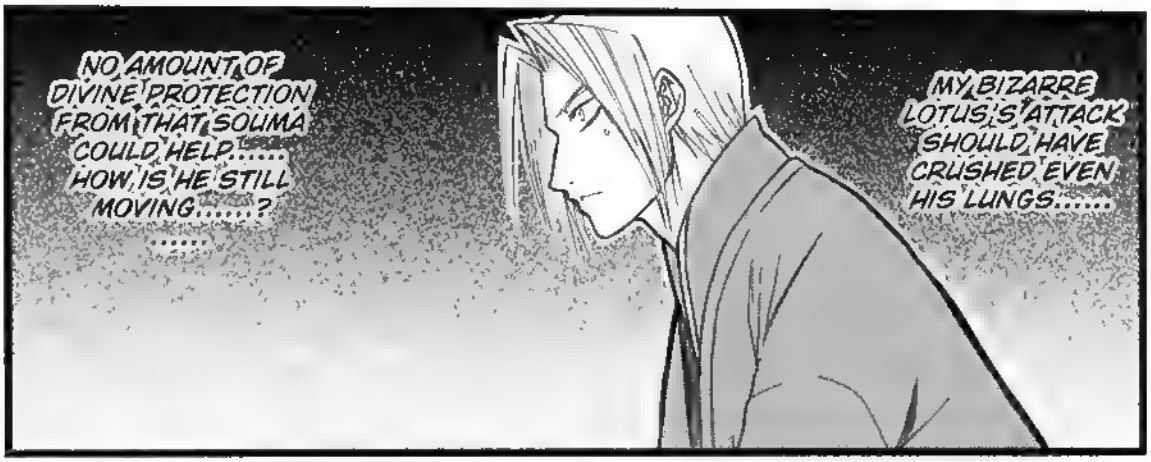
GIVE HER A NICE FRONT ROW SEAT.
DRIP
HEY, AKASHA. PIN THE GIRL DOWN FOR ME.

.....
OH?

!?
POW
SMASH


FSSHH
YOU FOOL !!
!
RISE


HMPH.
.....


NO AMOUNT OF DIVINE PROTECTION FROM THAT SOUMA COULD HELP..... HOW IS HE STILL MOVING.....? .....
MY BIZARRE LOTUS'S ATTACK SHOULD HAVE CRUSHED EVEN HIS LUNGS.....

...IS THAT OF A MAN WHO'S ACCEPTED HIS OWN DEATH...
HIS EYE.....

THAT EYE .....
...!!

JUST .....
...HANG ON A BIT LONGER.
SORRY..... MAKINA.....
.....
KEI-SEI...
I'M SO GLAD..... YOU'RE ALL RIGHT .....

.....NO.
WHAT'RE YOU PLAN-NING?
KEISEI .....?
BADUM

THAT RIGHT ?
I'M READY.
STEP
YOU WON'T GET AN-OTHER.
YOU...!! YOU SHITTY MONK.
NOT SURE HOW YOU PULLED OFF THAT LAST ATTACK THERE..... BUT NOW I'M PISSED, SO...

WHAT'S THAT TOOL?
...!?
!
POW
STEP
STEP
.....!!
SMASH
SMASH
SMASH
SMASH
SFX: SQUELCH
WHAM
BUAHH
SFX: SPLORT

SLAM
CRUNCH

DON'T GO STEALING MY THUNDER.
CRACK
CRUNCH
.....! AKASHA, YOU PUNK!!

DRIP
IF WE ARE TO KILL HIM.....THE FINAL BLOW MUST BE DECISIVE...
KEI-SE!
.....
AHH
SHIMEN-SAN..... THAT MAN.....
WE MUSTN'T GET CARELESS AROUND HIM.....
.....

MY BIZARRE LOTUS?
WHAT!?
!?
THUD
SPLAT

DOESN'T MATTER HOW STRONG YOUR MANDALA IS, AKASHA.
IT CAN'T MOVE NOW THAT I PARALYZED IT.....
ドル!
SHUFFLE
KOFF .....
THAT'S... ONE DOWN .....

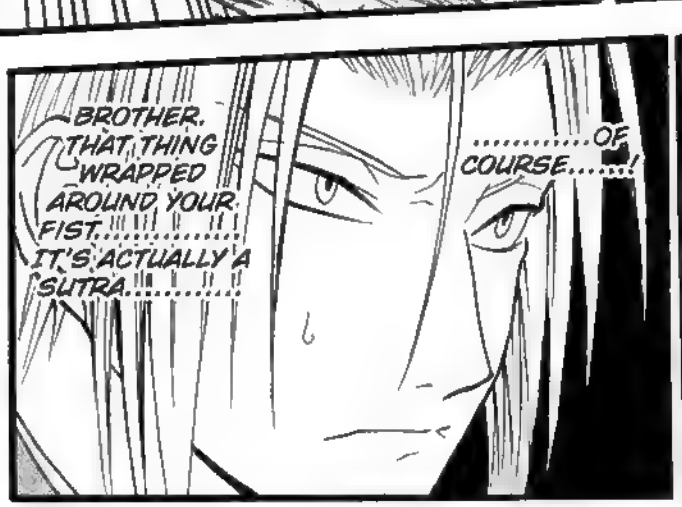
A BRANCH.....!? ANISE TOXIN...? I WAS TOO BUSY CRUSHING HIM TO NOTICE IT.....
BUT.....

NO ..... NO MORE ...
KEISEI .....
NO MORE.

COULD IT BE.....!?
.....!
NO MATTER HOW MUCH HE STRUGGLES, DEATH IS BEFORE HIM. LOSS IS INEVITABLE.....
HOW DOES HE HAVE ANY STRENGTH LEFT?
GUESS YOU WANT ME TO KILL YOU.
STAND
OOH. PRETTY SNAZZY.
SWOOSH
STAB
LIKE THAT'D STOP ME.....
KU KU... IDIOT ...
SLICE

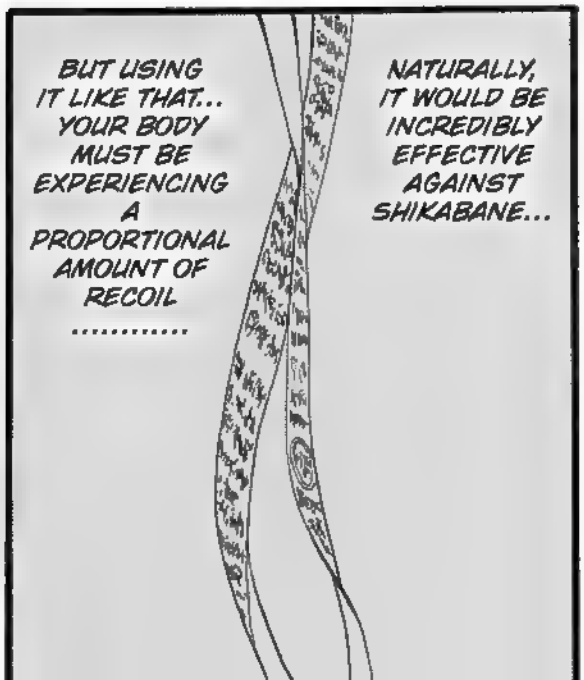
!!
KEI-
SEI
!!!
...
HA!
GUSH
AS
IF!!
STAB
SLICE
ARGHH.
GAHHH.
SPLATTER
HAA.
HAA.
DRIP
DRIP
I'VE
BEEN
WAIT-
ING...
...FOR
YOU...
...TO
GET IN
RANGE.
GRIND

SMASH
PON
GAH !!


BROTHER. THAT THING WRAPPED AROUND YOUR FIST..... IT'S ACTUALLY A SUTRA.....
.....OF COURSE.....!

TWITCH

SWAY
BROTHER..... SURELY, YOU'RE.....
TO TEMPT FATE LIKE THAT .....


BUT USING IT LIKE THAT... YOUR BODY MUST BE EXPERIENCING A PROPORTIONAL AMOUNT OF RECOIL .....
NATURALLY, IT WOULD BE INCREDIBLY EFFECTIVE AGAINST SHIKABANE...

SLAM

BIG ... BRO.
KEISEI .....
!!

STU-PID!
STU-PID KEI-SEI !!
OF COURSE YOU'RE NOT FINE!!

WHAP

I'M..... FINE...
RISE
NOT GONE YET .....

IT'S ALL BECAUSE I WAS SO CARELESS AND LEFT THE ROOM.....
BIG BRO..... THOSE HORRIBLE WOUNDS. THEY'RE... MY FAULT..... ALL OF THEM.
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
TWITCH
DON'T APOLO-GIZE!!
IT'S ALL .....
UMM... I'M SORRY .....
...I'LL HAVE TO KILL YOU!!
IF YOU DO .....
PLEASE!!
DON'T APOLO-GIZE...

.....
WHAT HAPPENED TO KEISEI ISN'T YOUR FAULT IN ANY WAY.
HE WAS JUST PROTECTING HIS OWN FAITH...
... PROTECTING HIS FAMILY, AND HIS PRIDE.....
BLUB
SO REALLY YOU'RE SAYING I SCREWED UP.
BIG BRO ...
IT'S NOT .....
...BE-CAUSE HE CHOSE YOU.
!
OURI .....
I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK.....

WHEN I'M GONE...
...HELP MAKINA AND THE OTHERS..... IN MY PLACE.....
GRAB
BIG BRO..... WHAT'S THAT MEAN.....?
.....
EH.....
.....
YEAH.
YOU DON'T MEAN .....
...YOU'RE GONNA TRANSFER OUR CONTRACT .....?
..... WHAT'RE YOU SAYING?

SLAM
SLAP

I CAN'T LET YOU GIVE UP!!
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I'VE GOT!!
MY COM-RADE ...!!

I WON'T LET YOU ...
I CAN'T .....
I WON'T LET YOU!!

SORRY... MAKINA...
BUT I'M DONE FOR.
.....

HOW MESSED UP I AM.
YOU CAN FEEL IT..... RIGHT?
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO EXPLAIN OR A GOOD REASON TO CONVINCE YOU.....
BUT FROM NOW ON..... I NEED YOU TO PROTECT EVERYONE IN MY STEAD.
BIG BRO..... I DON'T GET IT.....
.....THE CONTRACT WITH MAKINA... WITH MY CORPSE PRINCESS.
OURI... LISTEN.
I'M GONNA GIVE YOU HER CONTRACT NOW.
!
TWITCH
TWITCH

HONESTLY ..... THIS IS THE LAST THING I WANTED TO HAVE HAPPEN.
BECAUSE I KNOW..... WHAT A HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY I'M BURDENING YOU WITH.....
THAT'S WHY..... IT'S FINE IF YOU RESENT ME.....
BUT..... EVEN SO.....
EVERYONE HERE..... I CAN'T JUST LET THEM BE KILLED.
OURI..... HATE ME ALL YOU WANT..... BUT...
SAVE OUR FAMILY.
.....

YOU... UP UNTIL THE VERY END, YOU...
THANKS, OURI.
NOD
SFX: SQUEEZE
SHIN-GON.
YOU GAVE ME..... THE SUPPORT I NEEDED.
GLOW
THOUGH MY BODY MAY CRUMBLE, MY WISDOM ENDURES. I HOLD JUSTICE IN MY HAND.
FIND IT IN YOUR INFINITE GRACE TO SHOW THIS NEW SOUL THE SAME COMPASSION.
BADUM
TRANS-FER RITE.

YOU'RE NOW MAKINA'S CONTRACT HOLDER .....
BUT THE FULL TRANSFER ISN'T QUITE COMPLETE.
UNTIL IT IS, WE NEED TO KEEP THE ENEMY FROM—
BADUM
BADUM
.....
!!
SMASH
... HA.
GiHA-HA-HA-HA-HA.
AHA-HA-HA-HA-HA.
CRUMBLE
CRUMBLE
HAA-AA.
I'M MAD NOW, YOU LITTLE SHITS.
NO MORE..... I'LL RIP YOU TO SHREDS.
IT'S THE END FOR YOU.
TWINGE

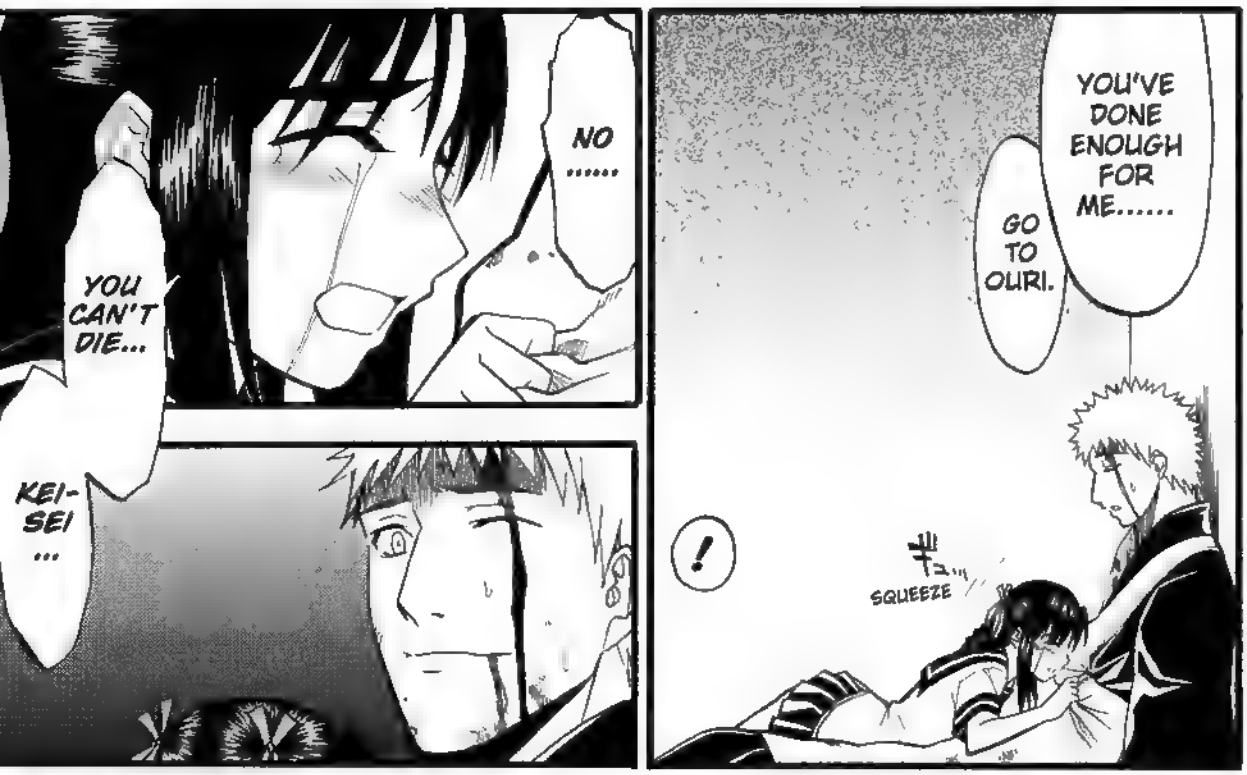
LET ME BUY SOME TIME.
IN THE MEANTIME, GET HER TO BRING YOU SOMEWHERE YOU CAN REST.
SHIT..... SPEAK OF THE DEVIL...
NO CHOICE... FOR NOW, I'LL.....
ONE MORE TIME, I GUESS
BIG BRO .....
!
I WON'T GIVE UP.....
GRIND
WHATEVER HAPPENS, I WON'T GIVE UP ON SAVING YOU, BIG BRO!!
NO!!
D-DUMMY! HOLD ON!! I'M FINE, LET ME .....
PLEASE.
CALL AN AMBULANCE WITH THE PHONE IN THE HALL..... SAVE MY BIG BRO.
EH?
HOSHI-MURA-SAN... CAN YOU MOVE?

DON'T PUSH ME.
GULP
.....I KNOW ALL THAT.
HOW'S A WIMP LIKE YOU GONNA BUY TIME?
I WANNA SEE THIS.
THAT'S PRETTY FUNNY, KID.

OURI, HE'S...
NO!
HOLD ON, MAKINA. GET BACK THERE.
WAIT!

NO WAY. NOT YET .....!
I CAN'T GIVE UP ON YOU...
I CAN'T DO IT EITHER.
ME TOO.

THUMP
I THINK I'VE LOST TOO MUCH BLOOD.
MY LEGS WON'T MOVE.
BUT I'M DONE.
! DON'T SAY THAT ...!
..... THANKS.

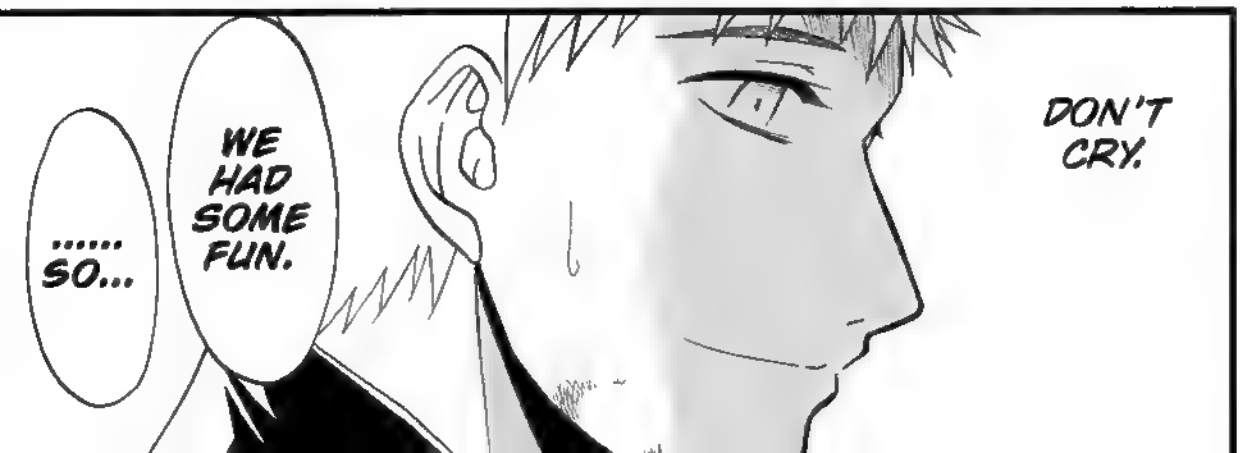

NO .....
YOU CAN'T DIE...
KEI-SEI ...
YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH FOR ME.....
GO TO OURI.
!
SQUEEZE

SPURT
I COULDN'T... KEEP MY PROMISE.
I FEEL IT. MY BODY'S SLOWLY SHUTTING DOWN.
THE SOUMA'S WORN OFF.....
GUSH
I'M SORRY, MAKINA.
.....

...TO HELP YOU SEE YOUR BATTLES THROUGH TO THE END.
MY PROMISE ...
PROM-ISE .....?
WHO CARES ABOUT SOME DUMB PROM-ISE?
JUST LIVE, KEISEI .....!!
.....
WHAT-EVER.
I'M SORRY .....
LIVE.
IF YOU CAN'T WALK, I'LL HOLD YOU UP..... SO...
YOU DON'T GOTTA FIGHT ANYMORE .....

I'M.....NOT SURE WHEN IT HAPPENED...
YEAH.....
KEI—
THANK YOU, MAKINA.

...WASN'T BAD.
...I REALLY CAME TO LOVE HER.....
THE TIME WE SPENT FIGHTING TOGETHER ...
BUT AT SOME POINT...


DON'T CRY.
WE HAD SOME FUN.
..... SO...

POW
TOO STRONG... TOO FAST..... I CAN'T DO ANY-THING .....
BUT... I'VE AT LEAST GOTTA TRY.....
RUSTLE
AHHH. NO GOOD, NO GOOD.
TUG
GAHH .....
CRACK
YOU'RE TOTALLY HELPLESS.
GUH ...
...YOU GOT CAUGHT, YOU MORON.
NOW DIE.
BUT...
WHAT'S THIS NOW? SOME OF THAT STRING FROM THE MONK'S BARRIER?
THOUGHT YOU WERE REAL CLEVER, SNEAKING THIS BY ME.....
GRAB
WHOOPSIE.

PUAH!
!?
CRUNCH
WHAM
KAPOW

SLAM

HOSHI-
MURA
.....
...
SAN
...
.....

CRACK
YOU
PUNKS
.....
THINKING
YOU CAN
BEAT ME
UP.....
GAH...
HAA.
SHIT
...

YOU
BUNCH
...
I CAN
NEVER
FORGIVE
YOU.....

STEP
I'LL
NEVER
FORGIVE
YOU.

I'LL DESTROY ...
...YOU ALL...!
EVERY LAST ONE OF YOU.

- CORPSE PRINCESS PRODUCTION HELPERS:
  SAKANO-SAN
  TASHIRO-SAN
  MARK-TSUAN
  OOSUMI-SAN
  KAWASHITA-SAN

- EMERGENCY HELPERS:
  MEGUMI-SAN
  NIJOU-TSUAN

- SUPERVISOR: SHIMIZU

AND THANKS TO ALL THE
READERS OUT THERE!

OURI KAGAMI

BLOOD TYPE: O (RH-)
HEIGHT: 167 CM WEIGHT: 52 KG
BIRTHDAY: JULY 7TH AGE: 16

FAVORITE THINGS: SWEETS (MOSTLY RED BEAN PASTE), MILK, CATS
LEAST FAVORITE THINGS: PARTICULARLY STRONG SPICES AND CONDIMENTS
SPECIAL ABILITIES: ALWAYS MANAGES TO LOSE ANY GAME OF LUCK
PEOPLE HE RESPECTS: THE RED BEAN PASTE ARTISAN "OUSMANE ANKON"

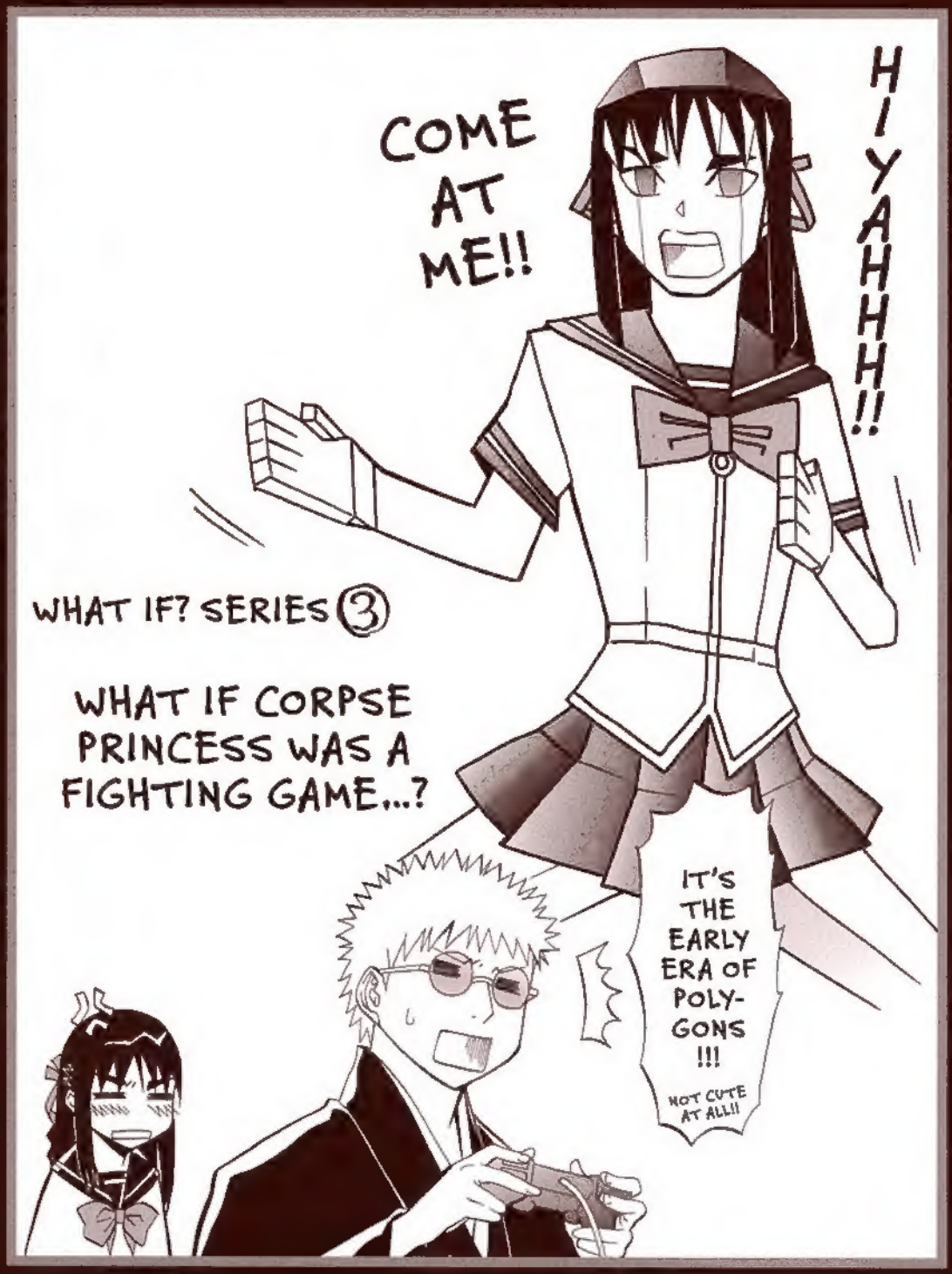
"I'LL DESTROY YOU ALL...! EVERY LAST ONE OF YOU," VOWS MAKINA HOSHIMURA. SHE AND OURI ARE BROUGHT TOGETHER BY PITY, DREAD, COMPASSION.....AND A PROMISE. THIS TRANSIENT WORLD OF OURS IS DRIVEN BY SUCH PASSION. THEY KNOW THEY CAN'T BRING HIM BACK, YET THEY PLUNGE DEEPER INTO THE OTHERWORLDY MIRE BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE UNCLEAN BUNCH.

SHIKABANE KILLS NEEDED FOR CORPSE PRINCESS MAKINA HOSHIMURA TO ASCEND TO HEAVEN: 95

4

volume COMING SOON

CORPSE PRINCESS


COME AT ME!!
HIYAHHH!!
WHAT IF? SERIES ③
WHAT IF CORPSE PRINCESS WAS A FIGHTING GAME...?
IT'S THE EARLY ERA OF POLY-GONS !!!
NOT CUTE AT ALL!!

AKAHITO YOSHIICHI

BROTHER, THE TEA IS READY.
THIS IS ISAKI-SAN
IT WORRIES ME. IT REALLY DOES.
WONDER IF THEY'RE GETTING ALONG DOWN THERE.

TRANSLATION NOTES

OVERALL

Japanese Buddhism has a complex ranking system for its monks called *soukan* (*sou* meaning "monk," and *kan* implying hierarchy). Monks in this story often address each other by rank.

PAGE 19

Daishi Kukai is a historical figure who lived during the 8th and 9th centuries, AD. He founded Shingon Buddhism in Japan and is often credited with inventing the Japanese phonetic alphabet, "kana." Kukai was born in Sanuki, Shikoku, and even today, the island remains a key location for Buddhist pilgrimages.

PAGE 206

Ousmane Sankhon is a former diplomat from the Republic of Guinea who lived in Japan and became a popular TV personality. Here, the author is parodying his name, because the "anko" in "Ankon" means "red bean paste"—which is Ouri's favorite food.

CORPSE PRINCESS ❸

Yoshiichi Akahito

Translation: Caleb D. Cook
Lettering: Bianca Pistillo

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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